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We honor Yuri Galanskov, the young Russian poet sent to his death in a Siberian slave-labor camp by the Soviet government for publishing an underground literary journal of resistance called PHOENIX. *And we remind our readers that the same breed of killer judges & officials are busy here in our own country, gagging their chained prisoners in American courtrooms and criminally conspiring to silence and legally murder those like Ruchell Magee and Imari Abubakari Obadele who expose and resist the anti-human hatreds now darkening our nation.*

From here on in the pages of this Phoenix are pledged to the struggle of liberation for Ruchell Magee and Imari Abubakari Obadele and to the abolishment of prisons.

The take-over and ruin of the German nation by the Nazis began with the imprisonment and extermination of Jews, then spread through every echelon of the German people. The insane haters seeking the take-over & ruin of our nation are filling the prisons of America with our Black brothers and boldly demanding further legal disguises for the murder of the most fearless voices amongst them. But only the demented believe that torture, terror and murder can keep us from truth and freedom. And unless you are an active accomplice of America's traitors, you are deluding yourself if you think your turn won't come so long as you remain merely a passive accomplice and fearfully avoid joining the resistance.

THE PHOENIX

Volume 4 No. 1 January 1973

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I CANNOT FORGET

Jean Giono

I cannot forget the War. I wish I could. Sometimes several days go by without my thinking of it, then suddenly I see it once more, I feel it, I hear it, I suffer it anew. And I am afraid.

This evening is the end of a beautiful July day. The plain below me has become all russet. The wheat is ready to be cut. The air, the sky, the earth are motionless and calm. Twenty years have passed. And in twenty years, despite the pains and joys of life, I have not cleansed myself of the War. The horror of those four years is always within me. I bear the scar. All the survivors bear the scar.

I was a soldier in the infantry for four years, in regiments of mountaineers. With M. V., who was my captain, we are the only survivors of the first Sixth Company. We went through Eparges, Verdun-Vaux, Noyon-Saint-Quentin, le Chemin des Dames, the attack of Pinon, Chevrillon, Le Kemmel. The Sixth Company was replenished hundreds and hundreds of times with men. The Sixth Company was a small receptacle of the 27th Division, like a bushel

of wheat. When the bushel was empty of men finally, when only a few remained at the bottom like grains stuck in the grooves, it was refilled again with fresh men. Thus was the Sixth Company replenished hundreds and hundreds of times. And hundreds of times it was emptied under the mill.

Of all this, we are the last survivors, M.V. and myself. I should like him to read these lines. He must do as I do in the evening: try to forget. He must sit at the edge of his terrace and he, too, he must gaze at the river, green and wide, flowing graciously through the thickets of poplars. But every few days he must re-suffer it, as I do, as all survivors do, and as we shall do to the end.

I am not ashamed of myself. In 1913 I refused to participate in the military preparations which gathered all my comrades. In 1915 I departed for the front without believing in *le patrie.* I was wrong. Not in not believing, but in going.

What I say concerns only myself. For dangerous actions I give no orders, except to myself. So I departed. I never was wounded, except the pupils of my eyes burned by gas. (In 1920 I was given, then later deprived of, a pension of 15 francs every three months on these grounds: *Slight disfiguration.*) I never was decorated, except by the English for an act which

was exactly opposite an act of war, so it was no martial action. I know I never killed anybody. I went through all the attacks without a gun, or rather with a gun that was useless. (All the survivors of that War know how easy it was, with a little earth and piss, to turn a Lebel rifle into a stick.)

I am not ashamed, but to consider well what I did, it was a cowardly act to have gone to War. I had the air of accepting. I did not have the courage to say: *I will not leave for the attack.* I did not have the courage to desert. I have only one excuse: it is that I was young. I am not a coward. I was duped by my immaturity and by those who knew I was immature. They were very exactly informed. They knew I was twenty. It was inscribed in their conscription records. They were grown men, experienced and crafty and knowing well what must be said to young men to make them accept a bleeding.

There were professors there, all the professors I'd had since my sixth class, and officials of the Republic, ministers, the President who signed the posters, in short all those who had any kind of advantage in spilling the blood of youths. There were also — I almost forgot them, but they are deeply involved — the writers who exalted heroism, egoism, vainglory, toughness, honor, pride. Writers who weren't all old

in body, but young ones also, who had become old by ambition and who misled and betrayed youth just to further their own opportunistic careers. Or who simply betrayed youth because they had the souls of traitors and could only betray.

Those are the ones who retarded my humanity. I hold it against them above all because they prevented that humanity from emerging at the precise moment when it would have led me to accomplish useful acts.

Anyway, what is done is done, and what is to be done remains to be done. Time is for everything, even this evening for contemplating this immense plain which spreads from the foot of my terrace to the river. The heat of the full day is heavy on the wheat fields. The heat smells like flour. Twenty years. For twenty years I have watched succeeding themselves these reapings and harvests of the earth, the budding of the trees, the reapings and harvests, the budding of my body. Twenty years, and I have been unable to forget!

There hasn't been a single moment of my life since 1919 that I have not been committed to opposing War. I should have fought against it during the time it clutched me, but at that time I was a young man deranged by the writers of the bourgeois state. My heart, which had been shaped by my father, the cob-

bler of the simple and pure soul, my heart did not accept the War and I marched with a clogged gun in the zero-hour of the attack . . .

What disgusts me about War is its imbecility. I cherish life. Truly, I cherish nothing but life. And yet, even though it is a grave thing to say, I understand that life can be sacrificed to a just and beautiful cause. I have tended victims of contagious and deadly disease without ever fearing for myself. But in War I am afraid, I am continually afraid.

Because it's useless. Useless for me. Useless for the comrade beside me on the line of skirmishers. Useless for the comrade opposite. Useless for the comrade beside the comrade opposite in the line of skirmishers advancing towards me. Useless for the infantryman, for the cavalryman, for the artilleryman, for the aviator, for the soldier, the sergeant, the lieutenant, the captain, the major — hold on, I was going to say colonel! Yes, maybe the colonel, but let us stop. Useless for all those who are flung under the grindstone for the human flour. Useful for whom, then?

Since 1919 I have struggled patiently, step by step, with everybody — with my friends, with my enemies, with weak allies of the workers, with powerful foes of the workers. And in the beginning I was not free, I was employed in a bank. That is saying everything.

They tried to make me lose my job. Already, in those days, they were saying: "He's a Communist" — in other words one has the right to deprive him of his sustenance and his life, him and everyone he supports by his work: his mother, his wife, his daughter. *I was not a Communist. I am not one now.*

I refused to join veterans' societies of ex-combatants, because at that time they were formed only for selfish aims, and not to affirm this quality of ex-combatants and never again new combatants.

I was in a lost world. I did not know what action those who thought as I did were taking. So I managed the struggle alone. In my family. It is often there that one must begin, and it is the most difficult. Usually it is there that one is vanquished.

I have not won, but I remain whole. Among my friends, several joined with me and are with me still. And then I began to write, and immediately I wrote for *life*. I wrote life. I wanted everyone to get drunk with *life*. I longed to make life seethe like a torrent and to make it rush upon all those dried and hopeless men, to make it hit them with vivifying green waves, to bring the blood to the surface of their beings, to stun them with freshness, with health and joy, to liberate them from the stagnant level of feet in shoes and to carry them off in the torrent. Whoever

is carried off in the wild flowings of life can no longer be mired in the slime of War and social injustice.

It was social injustice which led me despairingly along a futile road for four years. When I talked against War I was swiftly convincing. The horrors, all fresh, came back to my lips. I could make them smell the odors of the dead. I could make them see the burst bellies. I filled the room where I spoke with the muddy phantoms — eyes eaten out by the vultures. I evoked putrified friends, mine and those of the men who listened to me. The wounded moaned against our knees. When I said: *Never again!* they all echoed: *No, no, never again!*

But the next day we again took our places in the bourgeois civil regime. We began again to create capital for the capitalists. We were the tools of the capitalistic society. And in several days the indignation was spent. To begin with, the work furnished enough hardship, worry and evil, and immediate bad things so that the evils of the past were effaced and the dead comrades forgotten. And above all, because the rhythm of labor had been malignly designed to put us to sleep. This rhythm which had been passed on from our grandfathers into our fathers, and from our fathers into us. This inherent spirit of slavery transmitted from generation to generation, these

mothers perpetually pregnant with children conceived after work, had brought into the world only men already branded with the stigma of moral submission.

Society, they said, isn't as badly made as all that. You say that we fought not for our country — as they would have us believe — (and that we now know, and on that treachery we won't be again deceived), but for phosphates, for oil, for mines. I am a miner. — So, you are a miner? — If the mine closes, what do I eat?

There were small farmers, proprietors of three acres, who thought themselves spotlighted when I talked about large estate owners. There was even a grocer who defended the oil monopolies because he was selling kerosene and had a stock of five barrels in the back of his shop.

Their instinctive attachment to the bourgeois regime prevented them from being logical with themselves. They were as afraid of War as I was. Yet they were capable of immense courage. Without recognition and without glory they would tend typhoid victims, throw themselves into a river or enter into fire to save children, halt runaway horses, and tramp miles through the night of the great plains amidst those end of the world storms seeking a mad dog.

But they had been as terrified of the War as I was. They felt very distinctly by that very thing at the bottom of their flesh, by that part of their flesh in which swelled the immemorial history of humanity, that the fear they had of War came from its inhumanity. But by that part of their flesh which had cleaved to their mothers while they were still in the belly, they had inherited the chains of slavery. This primal enslavement induced them, just as it did me, to obey. To enter the mines as miners, to be farmers on the farm their parents had farmed, to become entangled as grocers on Main Street. And when confronted by the challenge of issuing forth from the stagnant abyss of their lives, their heredity prevented them from spreading out their arms in the liberating stroke of the swimmer.

One central perception should have guided us. I say *us* because I too had been blinded by ardor and indecision. *When one enters a struggle against War, one enters a struggle against Government.*

I said to myself: "You will refuse to shake hands with politicians. You will close your door to politicians, even if some day one becomes one of your own family, or if you should find yourself unsuspectingly the friend of a government officer." But I was told: "It isn't their fault." And even while thinking they

might have chosen another occupation, I was obliged to recognize that it wasn't their fault.

I said to myself: "You will obliterate in your daughter's history-book of France everything which is an exaltation of War." But it would have been necessary to obliterate practically everything, and in spite of all I had tried the teacher came to me and said: "What do you want, Monsieur Giono? What can we do?"

When I saw my friends again, they answered me: "Oil, potatoes, coal, jobs, money, salaries. There will always be War. What do you want — life is like that." They even reached the point of telling me: "It is in the nature of man." (Those who answered in this way were the smart ones, the ones who read books.)

And every time I went out on the roads of the earth I encountered little children with wild hair playing in the grasses, and I knew that all that was only butcher's meat, and there was therefore nothing left but to weep.

He who is against War is by that single act outlawed. The Capitalist State considers human life as a veritable raw material for the production of capital. It conserves this material only when it is useful to conserve it. It maintains it because it is a material and

needs to be maintained. And also, to render it more malleable, it permits it to live.

It has maternity wards where women are delivered with as much care as possible. It has schools where primary inspectors caress the cheeks of children. It has stadiums where 22 make sport and where a spectacle is given to 40,000. Spectacle already of battle, of combat. It has barracks.

The child at the edge of the road who plays in the grasses can only be cherished in its beauty and in its human freedom by a few mad-men of my kind. When I think that he has blue eyes and that all his life he will carry the glory of having blue eyes, that he will go, blond vagabond of the world, in search of hope, of despair, of love — when I think that perhaps he will nourish in his head the rhythms, the forms and the music which will carry humanity a little farther along in the immense prairie of the stars — when I think that indubitably he will only be a man among men, a listener and not the one who blows the bugle, one of the audience and not the one who stands erect in the circle — I say to myself: no matter what he may do, he lives, I admire this life.

The competing States *use* it.

War is not a catastrophe — it is a means of government. For all governments, everywhere.

The governments of this world do not recognize the persons who seek what we call happiness, the persons whose nature is to be what they are, human beings of flesh and bone — the governments know them only as material for producing capital. And to produce capital, every State has, at certain times, need of War.

The child, the blue eyes, the mother, the father, joy, happiness, love, peace, the shade of trees, the freshness of wind, the flashing course of waters, the State does not know.

It does not recognize, in its laws, the right of enjoying the beauties of the world in liberty. It has laws only for blood and gold.

In the tyranny of the State an elite minority thrives only on blood and gold. What every state causes to be said by its laws, its professors, its accredited writers, is that there is *the duty of sacrificing one's self. It is necessary that you, I, and the others, we sacrifice ourselves. To whom?*

The authoritarian States of society politely hide from us the road to the slaughter-house: you sacrifice yourselves *for your country's honor, for your neighbor, for your children, for future generations.*

And so forth, from generation to generation.

Who then eats the fruits of this sacrifice in the end?

Hence we know now very clearly what the issue is. All the competing States need War. It is one of their tools.

We cannot end War without ending the exploitative State.

I speak objectively. Here is an organism which is functioning. It is called an exploitive State as it might be called a dog, cat, or caterpillar. It is there, spread on my table, belly open. I see this organism functioning. In this organism, if I take away War, I disorganize it so violently that I render it incapable of life — just as if I took away the heart of the dog, or dissected the motor center of the caterpillar.

It remains to know what I prefer: live myself, permit that my children be children and enjoy the world, or assure by my sacrifice the continuance of a ruthless State. Let us continue to be objective. Of what use is my sacrifice? None! (*I hear! do not shout so loudly in the shadows, you victims of the factory. Don't speak, you who say your work-shop is closed and that there is no bread in the house. Do not howl against the gate of the chateau where there is dancing. I hear!*) My sacrifice serves nothing except to prolong the existence of an exploitive State.

This authoritarian State, does it merit my sacrifice? Is it kind, patient, amiable, human, honest? Is it seek-

ing happiness for all? Is it carried by its sidereal movement towards goodness and beauty, and does it carry War within itself only as the earth carries its central hearth? I do not ask these questions to answer them myself. *I ask them so that each of you will answer for yourself.*

I prefer to live. I prefer to live and bring an end to War and all authoritarian Governments. I prefer occupying myself with my own happiness. I don't want to sacrifice myself. I need the sacrifice of nobody! I want to sacrifice myself only to my happiness and the happiness of others. I refuse the advice of the rulers of the exploitive State, the writers and philosophers of the exploitive State. Do not trouble yourselves. I know what it's all about. My father and my mother made me arms, legs, and a head. It was to use them for myself. *And this time I will use them for myself.*

No more can one wander about the battlefields with one's gun like a stick. Disdain, acceptance of martyrdom, non-resistance — all of that cannot now be efficacious. Do you believe the State will tear its heart out *willingly*? War is the heart of every authoritarian State. War irrigates with fresh blood the industries of every contemporary State. War makes rise to the cheeks of the exploitive State the beautiful

color and peach bloom. You would believe that the State is going to tear its heart out because you are touching, imbecile, walking in the line of skirmishers with your gun like a stick?

There is only one single remedy: our strength. There is only one single way of using it: our refusal to obey.

Since our voices have not been heard.

Since our moans have not been heeded.

Since they have turned away when we have shown the wounds of our hands, our feet, our foreheads.

Since, without pity, they bring again the crown of thorns, and already see there prepared the nails and the hammer.

The earth peaceably makes bread. The mist of the summer has issued from the wheat-fields and fills all the horizons. In that slow movement in which it spreads over all the countryside it uncovers the palpitations of little brilliant dust-clouds: they are the light seeds of grain prematurely ripened which have taken flight. The heavy summer evening brings its shadows.

I recognize you, Devedeaux, who were killed beside me in front of the battery of the hospital in attacking the fort of Vaux. Do not disturb yourself. I see you. Your forehead is down there on that hill, resting on the foliage

of the holm-oaks, your mouth is in that little valley. Your eye, which moves no more, fills itself with dust in the sands of the torrent. Your burst body, your hands entwined in your entrails, is somewhere down there in the shadow as though under the great-coat which we threw over you because you were too terrible to see and because we were forced to stay near you with the enemy machine-gun sweeping the shell-hole on the surface of the ridge.

I recognize you, Marroi, who were killed beside me in front of the battery of the hospital in attacking the fort of Vaux. I see you as though you were still living, but your blond mustache is now that wheat-field that is called the field of Phillipe.

I recognize you, Jolivet, who were killed beside me in front of the battery of the hospital in attacking the fort of Vaux. I cannot see you because your face was sheared off at a single blow and I had bits of your flesh on my hands, but I hear from your inhuman mouth that wailing which swells and then is still.

I recognize you, Veerkamp, who were killed beside me in front of the battery of the hospital in attacking the fort of Vaux. You fell from a single blow in the belly. I was lying directly behind you. The smoke hid you. I saw your back like a mountain.

I recognize you all, and I see you again and I hear you. You are there in the moving mist. You are in

my earth. You have taken possession of the vast world. You surround me. You speak to me. You are the world, and you are myself.

I cannot forget that you were living men and that you are dead, that you were killed in the supreme moment when you were seeking your happiness, and that you were killed for nothing, that you were trapped by force and by deceit into actions where your interest did not lie.

You, whose friendship I knew, your laughter and joy, I cannot forget that the directors of the War considered you only as material. You, whose blood I saw, whose decay I saw, you who have become the earth, you who have become bank-bills in the vaults of the exploiters, I cannot forget the period of your transformation where you were mashed up to change your serene flesh into gold and blood which sustains the regime.

And you have won. Because your faces are in all the mists, your voices in all the seasons, your moans in all the nights, your bodies swell the earth as the bodies of the monsters swell the sea. I cannot forget. I cannot forgive. Your terrible presence forbids pity. Even for our friends, if they forget.

This prologue to Giono's novel *Refusal To Obey* appeared in our Easter 1940 issue in the midst of World War II. For further details see the information on Jean Giono in the Notes On Contributors.

THE DAYS OF A YEAR

Hervey White

*Christmas Night, 9 P.M.
86 Via Sistina, Rome

THE night before last, after finishing my daily chronicle, I put on my coat and hat and went out to see something of Rome by night. I wanted especially to see the annual Christmas fish market that I had read of in the *Roman Times*. The account of the auction of the great pile of fish was so well written that I said to myself I must not miss such a sight. Had it been in an American newspaper I would have gone to bed, but the *Roman Times* being an English paper I put full trust in all I found there.

The fish market is in the old part of the city near the Forum, perhaps a mile from here. Of course I tried a new and shorter route and of course I got lost and made my way through a much longer one. Still as the market was not to begin till midnight there was plenty of time.

**This seventh section continues from preceding issues.*

I found the streets almost deserted, though the night was clear and the hour was only half-past ten. Quite different from Naples. Even the Corso was lonely. A woman selling newspapers & matches was crying out: *"Cerini!"* to the glaring lights and a distant policeman.

This made me remember I had consumed my last match just several hours ago. *"Cerini!"* screamed the woman again, not seeing me approach for her back was turned.

"Give me a box," I said.

She turned in the flickering light, the wind blowing her hair across her face.

"I will take a box," I said again.

She put her newspapers under her arm. The wind was blowing wildly. She thrust her hand into a bag hanging at her waist, seeking a packet of matches, but in some way her hand slipped and did not go into the bag at all but emerged out in front with her expectant fingers sprawling in empty air. She looked at them there and laughed with a wild glee, her spirit undaunted as she battled with the wind and the night.

Another thrust was more successful and up came a packet of matches. Her smile was bright and triumphant with the wind still streaming her hair across

her face. I can pay such match-sellers double with pleasure in my heart. And there was a ring in her *Gratias* that was sweet in my ear.

As for the fish market, it was stupid enough. There were to be sure plenty of Romans out in the market at the midnight hour and there were fish enough, too, but I was so sleepy I could barely keep awake. Had not a peddlar calling out his hot corn bread come on the scene, the whole expedition would have been a failure. I wandered about waiting for something to happen till near one o'clock, then came home by still another route which turned out to be the longest of all. But that laughing match-woman there in the wind kept reappearing in my thoughts at odd intervals all the next day and today as well.

Yesterday I spent in Trastevere, in churches and streets along the Tiber watching the little huddle of boats that had brought wine up the river and were being unloaded by the men.

As it is the custom to have a big dinner on Christmas Eve I lingered last night with the porter and his wife longer than usual. It seems curious that while this Christmas Eve supper lasts some five or six hours among the rich where each considers it his duty to gorge himself, yet the gluttonous wealthy pretend

that they are fasting the watch because they allow themselves nothing but fish and wine.

After supper we had roasted chestnuts and punch and a bright wood fire in the kitchen. We sat chatting and looking at the blaze till bed time. I had been invited to have my Christmas dinner with them at midday of the morrow and the porter took me into the back room to show me some little pastries he had been making for our Christmas soup. They are called little hats and are filled with minced sweetmeats and chocolate. The porter does much of the cooking himself. Someday I will tell about this couple, the porter and his wife.

This morning the air was bright and fresh as ever. I set out to hear the mass in Saint Peter's in the Vatican. There was little to distract my attention on my way to the Vatican, though I paused for a while in a crowd watching a sleight-of-hand man selling lottery tickets on a corner.

As I went on into the wide piazza and walked closely past one of the large fountains there, the white foaming water against the blue of the sky evoked a past day at Niagara, the day when we visited the cave of the winds. I shall never forget it. And it all came flowing through my mind again while I was crossing the piazza.

First we had dressed ourselves in flannels and oilskins and put on coarse canvas shoes, securely tied; then we went creeping down the steep and windy stairs. All the while the thundering roar of the water was vibrating the air and shaking the island.

There was an awesome feeling of expectancy within us, for we were going to make our way under the great fall, the place where lives were frequently lost. I gained courage from the rough hardy look of our guide. We crawled along a slippery path with a driving rain of spray in our faces and we felt how strange it was not to be able to hear our own loudest shouts with our own ears through the quivering roar of the cataract.

Then we came to that front of seething blackness and each of us, in turn, were very glad to take hold of our guide's rough hand; with him in the lead, one by one, we creep forward, beaten, blinded, deafened by the pounding water. He has been here some thirteen hundred times. Perhaps he will come out once more alive. Surely we will too if he does. We have his hand for his pledge.

When it seems that the last vestige of our senses is leaving us, when we are deaf, dumb, blinded and feelingless, we come into a wide and sensuous darkness. The guide leads us toward one black wall —

the other is force-essence materialized and its merest touch would be instant death to such fragile lives as ours. The guide is regal here. He waves his arms spectre-like and his voice is fearsome and hollow as he calls to us: *"Cave of the winds!"*

We try to look around but the sweeping spray is in our eyes. The water fills the hollows in our faces to the brim. We are fountains of water. It is pouring from us at every joint and angle.

How glad we are in turn to take his hand again and know we are going out another way. Any way is better than the way we came.

Soon we are in the lightness of the upper region's air again and starting out along the path at the foot of the fall. Still the streaming water is sheeting us with blindness. We strive again and again to see, to look up at the fall. And for an instant I do see! Straight up a mile I think, clear up all the way, washing the blue of heaven at the zenith point, is that wonderful fountain of foaming cleansingness; white, whitest of white, snow would be gray beside it, and it is a fountain, it is not a river falling, it rises to a point, rising in descending, it is just for a flash in the eyes, and then is blindness again . . .

When I step into St. Peter's it is late. Groups of people are walking about over the wide pavement.

I have never seen so many in the Cathedral before. I walk for a time but soon go where the crowd is collected before the door of the chapel where the mass is being celebrated. I get well through the doorway to where I can hear the music, then I turn toward the priests in front of me.

Yes it is evident that I am late, and they have been eating, too; a servant is just clearing the table, shaking the cloth and brushing up the crumbs. Obviously this is a great holiday for them for they all have on their cleanest, whitest shirts. They must have a very good washerwoman, these priests, for their linen glistens like silver. They seem to be making preparations for family prayers, but the Bible is sick and has to be carried about carefully on a red satin pillow. Finally they give it up altogether and the servant takes the Bible off to bed, still keeping it on its pillow.

The priests then put some smelling salts in a bottle and set fire to them. These they pass around, even taking it away from home over to some neighbors, reverend looking old scholars in purple robes with rich fur mantles. When the servant who shakes the smelling salt bottle comes in front of these men, the old fellow rises and takes off his cap bowing a sort of: *Go ahead*; two shakes, and *Thank you*, bows the old gentleman; the servant passes on to the next.

I see by this time that the little collation going on when I arrived was not the main meal of the day. The butler comes in and lays the table cover with most exacting preparations. He spends a good minute with one of the folds which persists in hanging sideways.

After all I guess what I saw first was only the servants' early breakfast, for now in comes the man of the house. He must be a lord or something from the way he puts on airs. After he has appeared in the dining room he happens to think he is not dressed for dinner and a servant runs out for his robe. It is a splendid one of scarlet satin and there is a scarlet hat to match. These he proceeds to put on slowly, with much assistance from his menials. He does not mind us in the least; here before a great crowd of people he is as deliberate as if he were in his own private chamber.

Now that he is dressed he bethinks himself that he will read a chapter first. A footman brings in a well Bible, a serving boy holds a candle, though of course it is broad daylight, and another cassocked & surpliced boy is standing ready to turn the pages. However it seems that this is the wrong book and the footman carries it away, in deepest disgrace I suppose; he comes back with another book, presum-

ably the right one, for they all stand up and have a sing together by the light of the candles.

The lord does not seem to be feeling just right about his hat and skull cap. He is not at all sure whether it is the proper thing to sing there with one on his head, or both on, or both off. After much fidgeting he gets so hot that he has to take off his red dressing gown to cool himself. He takes a drink and waits for a lighter sort of overshirt which a servant is bringing in. Then on goes a second shirt, of white silk also, and tied with ribbons at the shoulder. He is old and a trifle gouty and he needs or pretends to need a great deal of help.

A broad neck-scarf and a string of beads complete his toilet, but now that he collects his thoughts and finds it colder than he had supposed, he calls for his gold-embroidered overcoat. This overcoat is beautiful, gleaming with gold threads and jewels, and careful enough the lord is of it, for two pages watch it all the time and studiously lift its tails when he goes to sit down, hanging them reverently over the chair-back.

Then they put a yellow pointed cap on his head and he takes a short but peaceful sit-up nap. When he awakes he pretends to want to read and turns around to face the book brought in, but anyone can

see that he does not care anything for the book; I suspect he only wanted us to see the gold ribbons hanging down behind from his yellow cap. Anyway the cap seems to hurt his head for it keeps going off and on, off and on all the time. Finally they get him another altogether, his very best this time, all embroidered with gold and sparkling with jewels.

These caps fold up when taken off; they were doubtless intended by the milliner for the opera or perhaps for travelling. They are not just the thing it seems for the dining room. It grows darker now and more candles are lit. This lord now makes me me think of old Capulet. The book is put away again and it seems at last our lord will have something to eat, but then the old and trusted servant of the family is taken sick. I have been noticing for some time past that he is not feeling well and now he seems to say as much to the master himself for they hurry to get out the smelling bottle again and ignite it while the kind old lord takes it in his own hands and fumigates the whole house thoroughly. His hat is on a shelf and the pages hold up the tails of his overcoat to allow him more freedom of motion for his arms and legs.

Still the trusted old servant does not seem any better. There is a terrible *gone* expression about his

mouth. They send now for an old Wizard who comes in and begins to read from a book of oracles. I knew all along that they were dreadfully superstitious, the whole set of them; I could tell it from the solemn way they walked around and the dignity they tried to assume. Besides they seemed to converse by signs, for though I never could hear a word all the servants knew in some secret way just what it was the lord wanted.

I happened to look at my watch at this point and saw it was already noon; they had been at this mummery two hours and nothing done yet. I had an engagement to dine with the porter and his wife; still I was sorry to leave for there was some beautiful music off in a side gallery and the sun was shining in through red silk curtains and flooding the whole chapel with the most beautiful crimson softness.

The sick servant, how did he fare? I can doubtless find out in tomorrow's paper, for though he is a servant I can see he is a man of importance. As for me I returned to eat my Christmas dinner without more ado.

It was a very good dinner. First came the little hats with their sweet fillings, boiled in broth; this was followed by three courses of meat; then fruit

and candy for dessert. Afterwards, when the sun left my roof garden, I went out for a walk.

I decided I would go to Mount Testuccio and started in that direction. All fashionable Rome seemed to be going towards the Pincio, although the English paper had told me that all Rome would be in its houses on Christmas day. But fashionable Rome did not tempt me and I moved along into the poorer part of the city. Here everybody was going towards the capitol. Children were blowing whistles, young men were with their sweethearts, mothers and fathers with the babies. And I realized it was all wrong for me to be going on alone while the world was making holiday, so I turned about and went with them toward the Capitoline Hill.

It felt good walking along this street thronged with happy people and knowing that every one of them had just risen from a meal joyous with the aura of the birth of Jesus. As I neared the hill I saw a curious sight.

The throngs of people were not going up the steps to the piazza at all but were veering and ascending a broad yet very steep flight of stairs on the left. How impressive it was to see that living ladder, for the steps are the full width of the street and rise very abruptly to the very top of the hill. And people,

hundreds of people, are coming down, going up, and tarrying; men are selling toys and sweets on the steps. I think of the old picture of Jacob's ladder. Of course I, too, go up. And behold, it is the church of Aracoeli at the top and the people are on their way to visit the famous Bambino there.

I see the bejeweled infant in the manger and I see this old church is made up of various ornaments robbed from the heathen. The children are crowding up on a platform and reciting verses to the Bambino. This is Christmas day at Rome. The children are all natural declaimers, as free with gesture as an opera singer. I watch the listeners as well. There are many priests, some of them very fatherly looking fellows. I did not think there were such kindly looking priests in Rome. I am sorry they can have no children of their own, they watch these so fondly.

I walked on to the Colosseum in the rose light of the evening, then home; and now this Christmas has just ended for the clock is striking twelve.

86 Via Sistine, Roma
December 26, 1894 9 P.M.

I walked out to San Lorenzo today and after spending an hour or so in that curious old double church

looking at the rich mosaics and the most beautiful arcade I have yet seen, I thought I would visit the cemetery nearby.

It was the first time I had been in a large graveyard in Italy and any American who has visited this country will know the odd intermingling of feelings I experienced there. The ludicrous, the curious, the mournful and the bizarre all seem uppermost at once. The tin wreaths, the cast iron crosses, the photographs and lanterns in little shrines under sheet iron roofs, all the thousand different kinds of gimcracks that are stuck in the level fields of mud cannot but seem promiscuous to the American eye accustomed to green mounds, spectral slabs of marble and gentle trees.

There are pretentious monuments and vaults here too, marking the graves in a section of the dead from the wealthy classes; and as I passed them I was thinking that American tombstone makers might come to Italy and still find new ideas in hideous and ill-shaped vulgarities. If all these ugly monuments and vaults would only vanish, the landscape and cypress trees in the morning haze would be beautifully simple and sufficient.

I left the section of vaults and made my way back into the forest of tin tombstones again, for here at

least I can be merry with death. Still, I reflect as I go on, it would be horrible to be buried here under all this rattling foliage.

Wandering along a path I approached a small group who were just completing the erection of one of these flimsy little shrines. It was a husband dead, the wife weeping over the fresh earth with her daughter by her side, while her two sons were trying to light a small oil lantern hanging under the sheet-iron roof. The matches would not ignite at first, or expired too soon as they huddled by their mournful toy. But when the light was fairly started, how homelike the little tin-bedecked space became and how lovingly they fussed about with the bead wreath and the tin nosegay. It was like a child's playhouse.

I walked on but was not so merry with my tin forest as I had thought to be. On the hill looking off onto these smiling plains of Rome I encountered another mourner along my path; a young man visiting his mother's grave. He examined the little lamp and sadly noted the oil was all consumed. He put the lamp back in its place and carefully closed the little glass door. There was a hole in one side and he tied his handkerchief around it to keep it firm. Then he stood looking at the cheap photograph long and silently. Now and then, during his grieving visit,

he would rearrange the tin wreaths, to see if they could not be made to become each other even better than they did.

I grew weary of this landscape and walked homeward thinking of final things. If I should die in Rome would it not be cheering before death to know that I should have over me for a time these homely offerings and that perhaps some friend would come and set them to rights at times and at least feel sorry that the oil in the little lamp was spent?

86 Via Sistina, Rome
December 27, 1894 9 P.M.

If one sunny day in the Rome Campagna can be more beautiful than another I think today has been the one. I had started to visit a picture gallery but finding that this is a feast day I was glad enough for an excuse to turn countryward. One or two churches delayed me for I can never go by an open church, but by eleven o'clock I was at the Porta San Giovanni looking out the new Appian Way.

An hour's walk brought me the realization that I was not on a sight seeing road. There were no carriages, only the rumbling carts of peasants and teamsters. I think I have mentioned these carts

enough to give a little more time to their description.

To begin with, the two wheels of these carts are very large, often six feet in diameter and generally are painted blue. Today I saw a gay one whose wheel spokes were decorated with green-fronded red and white flowers on the azure background. The high wheels bearing the bed or platform of the cart make it very lofty also. This bed is usually about ten feet long and is balanced levelly on the axle.

The shafts extend straight forward from this and come well up on the horse's back, fitting into a heavy yoke. This gives the idea to one not in the cart that the horse is about to be crushed down by the weight of the cargo and cart, but when you mount the cart you get the opposite feeling and expect constantly to have the cart tip back on its haunches leaving the horse pawing the air. This clumsy arrangement is especially wicked if the horse falls. I saw a horse down the other day in the Vatican court, with the full weight of a load of stone pressing the shafts into the poor beast's panting sides and blood streaming from his nostrils. He would have been gaunt and trembling enough just feeding in a pasture. There were men around making feeble efforts to get the cart off. I could do nothing but go off cursing a pope who would allow such old spent horses to drudge

on for his glorification.

No doubt though, a good horse takes much comfort under his heavy yoke. In Naples this yoke is the foundation for a sort of Gothic facade built up of brass work and adorned with various jingling bells and whirling vanes. Here in Rome there is nothing of that, yet something much more appreciated by the horse is added: a holder for a bundle of hay which he has only to reach around and comfort himself with a meditative mouthful as he pulls the cart. There are often ribbons of red flannel in his harness here as well as in Naples. And sometimes long swinging fluffy tassles in front of his chest.

The comfort of the driver is considered as well; and here again we see Rome is vastly superior to Naples. In the front left corner of the cart there is a sort of pulpit constructed of poles, hoops and a top of canvas or hides to shelter the driver's seat. This pulpit seat — I can explain it better by saying it is shaped like a calla lily — has a folding top, like that of a carriage, so that in rain or cold weather it can be drawn over the driver. And there he sits within, snug as if he were beside his own fireplace. I have never seen the mysteries in the receptacle at the bottom of this pulpit, beneath the driver's seat, but I suspect it contains various morsels of bread and

bottles of wine, with chestnuts and salt fish; and a good bag of corn or oats for the horse, I hope.

These shelters for the driver would scarcely be ample enough for two, unless the driver were young and his girl were going along with him. Then how intimate the little booth would be!

Beneath the cart often swings a tray with extra articles belonging to the teamster's life. Most of these carts are loaded with kegs of wine.

Once out in the country today I left the highway, climbed over a barbed wire fence, and sat on a knoll to eat my bread purchased at the last wine shop. The ground is very cold but the sun is so hot now at midday that I can take off my coat and improvise a seat of that.

A long line of ruined aqueduct arches stretches away to my left and the pale blue Sabine hills shimmer in the distance beyond the plains, still telling how they were once a Capri rising from the sea. To the right are the rows of ruined tombs along the old Appian Way. I read my guide book, look at the sky and think what a glorious thing it is to be alive.

When the hour's nooning is over, I get up and wander across the plains without any road towards the old Appian Way. It is so much more pleasing walking on the soft turf. I can feel it rising to caress

the soles of my feet. Then there is the excitement of leaping the ditches; feathery gray weeds and prickly thistle-stalks rise up about my knees; the spice of mint is tingling in my nostrils.

Close by the tombs I saw a shepherd reading. I heard him as well for he was reading aloud, mumbling and droning, and stopping occasionally to call out to the sheep. What was he reading? One would scarcely have expected a reader in such a roughly clad fleece-caped fellow. If the reading was kept up, how long would the shaggy cape be worn? What was he reading? I could stand it no longer and looking up the name of a village in my guide book I walked up to the shepherd and asked if it was the village lying ahead. The guide book was quite right.

"What are you reading?" I asked.

He smiled.

"A good book, a history of France."

He showed it to me proudly. It was an old worn volume of half romantic tales, beginning with the Emperor Constantine. As I handed it back to him I offered to bring him some more books when I came back again, for I am coming again. I must see the interior of that haystack shepherd house. And I want to know his philosophy and meet the children playover there with the sheep.

He is an intelligent looking youth and is married but has no children. He does not live here always. Oh no, he goes into the Sabine mountains yonder in the summer when the malaria is over the land. I convey to him that I will return and I leave him to go on with his reading, which he does. He wastes no time staring or wondering. He has seen city people and foreigners before.

The view was so beautiful from the old street of tombs that I sat on the wall till near sunset. I had to walk fast and long to get home in time for supper.

(To be continued)

CATHERINE

John Mitzel

IF in the recent past you were in Cambridge, Massachusetts and walking down Broadway between Central Square and Harvard Square, and if you happened to feel hungry and could entertain the idea of eating a sub sandwich, you might have found yourself entering Catherine's restaurant.

Had a breeze been blowing in your face you would have smelled the shop before seeing it — an ordinary place with two plate glass windows set in wooden frames from which brown paint was peeling and an entrance door that someone in its long line of entrepreneurs had thought to paint red. *Drink Coke* said a decal on the door. The plate glass windows displayed crudely printed signs. *World's Best Sub Sandwiches* boasted one. *Hot Meals* shouted another. *Orders To Go!* cried yet another. Taped on between these were several temporary scraps of paper featuring various *Today's Special* notices that had not been removed for months.

Pushing your way through the door, which stuck in damp weather, you would enter Catherine's dismal domain. Everything competed at once to overcome

you. Your five senses bravely organized themselves to combat the onslaught. Pungent smells, lurid neon lights illuminating the bill of fare, a jukebox in the corner with revolving photos of aging pop stars, and garishly clashing colors of the interior decor.

Catherine, after eyeing you with mixed emotions, half-glad for your patronage, half-knowing that nothing could save the sinking venture so why bother, would have rallied to greet you from the other side of the counter. If it were early enough in the day, she might have risen from her stool, her knees cracking, uttering a sound bordering between a sigh and a groan. More likely, though, the act of establishing eye contact would serve as her greeting. She hated having to ask anyone what they wanted. Was there anything in the world that someone didn't want? And there were always those smart alecks who would tell her they wanted happiness to go, money on a roll, love with relish . . .

After Catherine was told your choice — and let's say, for instance, you selected a roast beef sub — she would lumber to the rear, slice a sub roll, lubricate it with mayonnaise, then fill it with beef shavings, perhaps disturbing a few sluggish flies in the process. At this point she would ask:

"Wantanythingonit?" and shift her attention to a

row of containers half-filled with slices of tomato, onion cubes, peppers, garlic, olive oil and sundry other embellishments.

She would hand it to you on a paper plate, or if it was to go out wrap it in waxed tissue paper and drop it into a bag, take your money, make your change and perhaps, though very unlikely, give voice to a limp:

"Thank you."

This was her life during fourteen hours a day. It was mostly sitting. There would be a flurry of business at noon, but not much; then another in mid-afternoon when school was let out. The high school kids used her place more for a social center than as a restaurant. They had no respect. They always checked the coin-return slot in the telephone and in the Coke machine. What right had they to do that? Catherine felt that *she* deserved those infrequent rejected coins of malfunctioning technology for which she waited so patiently. But it wasn't the stray dimes she lost by their finds that she minded, it was the *satisfaction* that went with such coins.

The noisy high school crowd pumped quarters into the jukebox, mainlining its din into their brains to disperse all impressions that school left in their minds. A few of them would buy subs, but they were always

altering their orders after they were half completed, wanting an egg salad changed to an Italian sausage with relish, or tomatoes instead of onions. Not only that, but after they took their food they passed it around to others in their groups, oozing the contents out of the rolls and slopping it onto the floor, shrieking with laughter all the while. Why did they behave that way? So spoiled, so indifferent to the work they made for others. Their mothers probably hated her for sabotaging their appetites for supper. And the kids only made a mess of the place anyway, so who gained?

Her television filled the gaps. Catherine was a devotee of day time soap operas where misery had style, or at least came in quantities enormous enough to dwarf any viewer's woes. Her boss found her watching it once, on a cold day last winter when he came into the shop unexpectedly, and he told her it didn't create the proper business atmosphere. She still watched it on the sly anyway, keeping the tiny portable down under the work counter next to the lettuce and grated cheese.

Fourteen hours a day is a long stretch for any kind of work, especially when you neither own the place nor receive a half-way decent salary. Worse yet, when Catherine would leave the shop around eleven-thirty

each night she'd smell of anchovies, olive oil, relish and onions. After several months of working there she began to fear she'd never lose those odors, that she would go to her grave smelling like a meatball sub returning to its Maker.

There were some among her customers she liked, those infrequent ones who saw that she was Catherine, a *real* person behind the counter, flesh and blood with needs and hopes and desires, not merely some drudge staffing a one-stop eatery.

Like Tom and Harry, two young men living around the corner from the sub shop and lovers in the first year of their affair. One was a wiry intense composer and music teacher; the other taciturn, a quiet intellectual zoologist. Young men from different backgrounds, now declasse, though passing through this state in opposite directions: Harry moving into the social respectability of academic-research-government foundations; Tom into bohemianism and the uncertain life of the expressive creator.

"Boys, boys," Catherine would beam, seeing them enter the shop, standing up, all smiles. "So good to see you. What can I do for you?"

"Hello Catherine," Harry would say dourly, as effusive as he could get.

"Hi Catherine," Tom responded. "How's it going?"

Details, details, always the details. How could anyone understand the agony of it as well as Catherine? Why had she ever taken this job? What had ever made her believe it could prosper and *she* along with it? She didn't even own a portion of the business, but the boss expected her to run the place as though she did. She had to place all the orders, receive shipments, keep the books and fight off the creditors. Creditors! Ugh! the very word made her back stiffen and brought fire to her eyes. Could anyone be so cruel as to close down the shop over a delinquent bill of less than a hundred dollars when it would cause confusion and anxiety in the lives of other people? Catherine knew they did it all the time and lost no sleep over it.

The boss demanded his money, the creditors were always sending her those threatening letters. Business was spotty at best. The quality of food she ordered dropped off with each shipment. And Catherine was getting older every day. Her husband had divorced her; her grown-up children were scattered in far away places across the nation. Catherine had no friends to turn to. One might ask how any person could get herself into such a dismal rut; but by asking it, one reveals that one has the security of family or friends plus some money in the bank, even if only a little.

When it happened, it happened quickly. Tom made it known to some friends who were visiting him. He announced it as they were getting up to leave.

"Oh, by the way," he told them, "Harry and I are going to have a woman living with us."

Everyone sat down again, demanding specifics.

"Well she's the lady who works in that sub shop around the corner from here on Broadway. But the shop is going bankrupt and she says she has to escape. And she has nowhere to go. No money, no family, nor friends. So Harry told her she could stay with us until she got straightened around. He likes her. I guess I do too, though I never *dreamed* she'd be living with us."

"A stranger?"

Tom shrugged as he replied:

"Not exactly."

"Where will she sleep?"

"On the couch in the living room."

When Catherine moved into their place she went into hiding. She feared the owner of the shop would catch up with her and take revenge for the way she had abandoned his business.

"But it's not my fault," she pleaded to Tom and Harry on her first night with them, wringing her hands.

Tom thought nobody ever actually *did* this in real life, only on TV — but maybe that's where Catherine picked it up.

"The bill collectors were breathing down my neck and what could I do? Each week we made less and less. I worked like a slave and got nothing out of that place. I guess it was a mistake. Next time around I'm going to find a really *good* job, something that pays right and that will take me someplace."

Catherine admitted to being over fifty and had already seen a lot of places. For three weeks she didn't venture out of their apartment. She feared her former employer might be searching for her to wreak revenge for her drop-out. Meanwhile, even within the security of Tom and Harry's apartment, she was exploring her future.

"I can always go and stay with my daughter, Doreen, in California. She'd love to have me. There's really nothing keeping me here in the East."

She laughed blithely, a hint of casual California already tinting her style. But when she phoned her daughter, Catherine was informed by the operator in Sacramento that her daughter no longer subscribed in her former listing.

"Oh dear, I'd better write to her then. I can't imagine what happened."

So Catherine wrote. And waited.

She became a part of the daily household establishment. Harry worked from nine to five every day at Harvard. Tom was accustomed to having the apartment to himself, to wrestle with his latest composition. Catherine's presence put a swift stop to that. She was a constant talker and she had an opinion on everything. She was making up for the lack of a conversational companion during all those long hours in the sub shop.

Not only that, but she misunderstood Tom and Harry's arrangement. She knew they were lovers, though the idea of two men in an affair was incomprehensible to her and the attendant intimacies beyond her conceptions.

"My son, Bernard, he's the oldest boy, is living in Florida and to tell you the truth I think he's — "

"He's what?" Tom asked as they both sat at the cluttered kitchen table for their second cup of coffee late one morning.

Catherine had her hands folded in her lap and she kept her eyes from meeting Tom's. She knew she shouldn't be embarassed to admit her son was homosexually inclined, not now, after witnessing the affection generated in Tom and Harry's love.

"Well, let me say that I only hope he can find

someone nice like Harry. I hope he finds — ah — the right boy."

"Oh! your son's gay!" Tom said, finally understanding her circumlocution.

"I didn't say that," she said defensively, like a little girl arriving home in a smudged party dress and denying she had anything to do with it.

Tom was incapable of working on his compositions with Catherine around all day, fussing in the kitchen, watching daytime TV, cornering him for a nice long chat. He'd sit around the apartment trying to keep out of her way, unable to concentrate, idle, ill at ease, wondering just what toll Christian charity could ultimately take.

Catherine, unaware that she had disturbed his work, assumed Tom's inactivity *was* his normal day's occupation. To her, Harry embodied the Male Principle. He was the one who went out and made a living. He paid homage to convention, Tom was housewife, the stay-at-home domestic.

"Harry's smarter than the both of us put together," she confided to Tom one day with a knowing wink, sure he'd agree.

Tom did a slow burn, unwilling or unable to make the clarification for her.

"He's so hard-working. He'll go far, I'll bet," Cath-

erine continued, showing a Mother's pride.

And me? Tom thought silently. What future do you have envisioned for me?

After she had designated Tom a housewife, she quickly opened up all the channels of housewifely communication with him. Butter versus margerine; stay-pressed clothes versus ironing; soap versus detergents. She still didn't dare go out, so she'd corner Tom with her little lists as he pulled on his coat.

"Oh, if you're going down the street — " she'd hum, hurrying for her purse, extracting a rumpled dollar bill, "could you pick up a few little somethings for me at the drugstore?"

"Well, okay," Tom consented, having actually considered the possibility of refusing.

Catherine had never reached the awareness that there were two sides to all requests, even small ones. After abandoning the option of joining her daughter on the West Coast, if in actuality her daughter was there, and thinking it best to get out of Cambridge for fear of her former boss, Catherine hit on a compromise. She settled for a move to Worcester, Massachusetts. She put herself up there in a cheap residence hotel and thought she could get a job through the Employment Security Office. But when she went in and asked for work they just laughed in her face.

Hard times encompassed Worcester, too. When she had only a few dollars left, she repacked her bags, took a bus back to Cambridge and came knocking on Tom and Harry's door again.

So Catherine moved in a second time.

Harry could seemingly take anything in stride, but this repeat intrusion ate away more and more of Tom's freedom. That bottomless all-day cup of coffee, those hours of meaningless chatter, that appalling parade of soap operas on the tube — oh, if only one could help another without having to suffer that other's intrusive personality.

This time, though, Catherine seemed determined to get a job fast, *any* job. On her third day back from Worcester she and Tom pored over the classified ads. Catherine fingered a live-in domestic position offered by a family in the rather far reaches of Newton. She phoned and set up an appointment. Tom decided he would escort her to the job interview. Their bus wound its way through the suburban intestines as they rode further and further on into the realm of the nouveau riche, contiguous to nowhere.

It was a blandly obnoxious family. Papa, having built up a chain of retail lumber yards, had recently sold out to a big nationwide corporation. After the introductions and a brief glimpse of Papa's business

prowess, while Mama probed Tom out of the corner of her eye, wondering what his relationship was with the job applicant and why he wore that grubby cloth for a headband, she agreed to show Catherine what the job would involve.

The house was as huge as a chateau and it was obvious that its occupants had not yet grown used to its space. Every room was overfurnished in a mish-mash of styles; persian rugs, swedish modern, french provincial, Italian baroque, early American, all the banalities. The ornate master bedroom had its own private bath with a sunken tub. The living room was walled massively in stone masonry, painted white. A plastic pink flamingo stood in an illuminated pool in the center of this room, surrounded by tiny cupids spraying tinted water through the arrows lodged in their bows.

Mama led them on in a tour through the ticky-tacky mansion's congeries of rooms, finally taking them down into the basement game area and the longest and most opulent sideboard bar Tom had ever seen, filled with a glittering array of expensive liquors. None of the bottles seemed to have been opened.

"Isn't all this lovely!" was Catherine's constant remark. "You have so many lovely things."

"Of course, we'll want all the rugs and carpets vacuumed every day. And everything in the house must be kept polished and dusted," Mama said.

"That will be a lot of work," Catherine replied, a faint note of dismay in her voice.

"*Naturally* it's a lot of work," Mama agreed.

Catherine saw herself having to drag her way up and down all those stairs dozens of times each day and her heart sank. As they took their leave, Papa was still seated at the kitchen table, eating prodigiously.

"I'll call you," Catherine promised, lying.

Tom was depressed all the way back to Cambridge.

"You know," Catherine said on the bus, "it would take a lot of work, keeping all those rooms clean."

"Oh, to hell with her!" Tom exploded, thinking how horrible that someone, even if not Catherine, would wind up with that job, over-worked, exploited, having to live with that moribund couple.

But Catherine was not deterred by this disappointment. And her persistence paid off. She landed a job as a superintendent of a rooming house in Brighton. Her duties made her into a concierge. It was her responsibility to see that the tenants paid their weekly rent on time, took good care of the property, didn't allow members of the opposite sex in their rooms

after ten o'clock, and to keep the front door locked at all times. And so she joined that particular sisterhood of women who came from no-one-knew-where, the dragons of the first floor front.

Catherine's new job kept her confined to her room almost all of the day. She had to become a Nosy Parker, peeking out each time she heard the front door open. Her room came free and she was paid thirty-five dollars a week. Enough to keep her in food and cigarettes.

It wasn't too long after taking this job that Catherine began drinking. And whether one could find in one's mind reasons for understanding this alcoholic turn of events, it was an undeniable fact. Catherine was drinking heavily. Tom and Harry learned of this through Bill. And those who still cared or bothered to listen found out from Tom. Bill was a friend of theirs who had become devoted to Catherine. He was so attached to her that he'd even journey out to Brighton to visit her there — the only one now to do so.

Back when Catherine was staying with Tom and Harry the first time, she got herself entangled in the politics of romance. She thought she saw some significant undercurrents. After all, being a woman, a wife and a mother gave her what she considered to

be a vantage point in reading romantic scenarios. And she remained non-partisan. She only wanted to share her advantage of experience with the trio involved.

In the circles they moved in the fact that Bill was frequenting the Tom-Harry apartment in Cambridge caused a mild stir, mostly among those who had little to talk about. Tom claimed that he and Bill and Harry were all on the best of friendly terms. But to Catherine's shrewd eye this friendship masked other purposes and goals. Without having heard the whispers, she sensed undercurrents.

"You know," she told Tom one day, "though I like Bill very much, I think I should let you know he's trying to take Harry away from you."

Tom raised an eyebrow.

"What makes you think that?"

"Oh, there are ways of detecting these things. I can spot them miles away. I'm surprised you haven't seen them. He's obviously very crazy over Harry."

"I know that," Tom said, stunned by the thought of Harry and Bill as lovers. "But I've never considered it a real threat."

"Well, I'm sure of it. You'd just better take care. Don't take anything for granted with Harry. Make him feel wanted at all times."

Yet Catherine didn't want to feel that she was finking on Bill. Though she knew her loyalties, involved here with Tom and Harry who were buttering her bread, she felt a strong pull of friendship for Bill. He actually liked her in his aggressive social-worker-ish way. He'd call up on the phone and just chew the fat with her, ask her how she was doing. He was her kind of people.

And his treks out to Brighton strengthened her affection. It was on one of these visits to her at the rooming house that Bill saw the gin bottles. One stood half empty on the cupboard shelf, partially hidden behind a large jar of *Coffee-Mate.* And there were two other empty gin bottles and a six-pack of beer cans in the trash basket — a dead giveaway.

She called Bill one night at his place. She didn't want him to think she wasn't aware of his strategems, even if Tom and Harry chose to remain blind to them.

"I know what you're up to, you mischievous young man," she told him, giggling tipsily and shaking a stern finger at him which he couldn't see.

What were the last reports of Catherine?

"We're a little worried about her drinking," Tom said one day, responding to the curiosity of some

friends. "Actually Bill's the one with the hard facts, although she still phones here now and then. We always promise to get together real soon, but we know we never will. Last time I talked with her she told me she had bought a lottery ticket. She said it cheered her up, deciding how to spend fifty thousand dollars. It's very sad."

Lottery tickets, newspaper coupons, TV contests and fantasy homes for the dispossessed. All of it more than sad, everyone knew. Because Catherine would bump along through what remained of her impoverished life, sinking ever deeper into an unsalvageable situation, clutching more and more at casual acquaintances, attempting to shape them into some semblance of friendship, while her few dwindling options silently sealed themselves off, leaving her alone with only her magazines, television, and her alcoholic world of illusions, with no real solace except occasional stray crumbs of kindness from strangers who shrank from anything more than a transient pity.

THE FIRST AND ONLY TIME

Leonard Chabrowe

SEPTEMBER 195–

from day to day

IT was the beginning of another year in the sixth millenium of the Jews. Our single lives were no longer part of that, but I'd taken it as the occasion of a first few days on pass. The sun was lost in a dull haze as if making the transition from summer to fall.

The elderly doctor had the look of a lecher as if making a more fatal transition. We'd found him through my medical student friend, who had been sure he was safe and reasonable. There would be no scraping or cutting, no lost fertility or worse. And he was even a licensed general practitioner.

"It's my own method, my dears. It takes about nine days, depending on how long you're pregnant. You have to count from the last menstruation. But it always works and all the women like me. They even

This is the second & concluding part of the opening section of this novel for which its author is seeking a publisher.

come back to see me after it's finished. Besides, abortions usually cost more than I ask, and those are the risky surgical kind. I do it for less since I enjoy helping people, especially young people."

He was short with long arms and gray hair.

"I'll need the money the next time you come."

And the mole on his chin was ashen like a knot in a rotten bark.

"That cubicle with the curtain is for getting undressed."

So Roberta had the first injection, and into her uterus he stuffed a gauze treated with an acidic compound. I waited in the anteroom where the paint was peeling off the walls. There was a long and shuddering moan, though nothing more.

The money we brought the morning after next, most of it coming from a recently matured war bond my parents had once purchased in my name. Then she went every day for the injections and changes of the inducing gauze.

Sometimes her dark-haired friend went with her to make up for my not being there. And through it all she retched from nausea, vomiting the secret up and down again. How naive and tactless I was, she said, and late one evening spewed out loathing for me — why don't you leave me alone, let me do it by my-

self, get out of here and never come back. I dreamt she was adulterous with an old man barrel-chested above and leprous below and that she gave birth to a child like her father. The old man himself merely thought his daughter wasn't feeling well. Yet his very unknowingness was comforting to her.

"He wants to call his doctor if I'm not better soon. I'm tempted to let him now."

"It won't be much longer."

"It's been too long already!"

OCTOBER

It was the Jewish atonement day. For me there was no divine absolution, but I wanted to make things up at least to her. It was a chilly gray afternoon, and I searched for the fashionable ladies' wear shop with the dark green blouse we had seen two months before. I wanted to give her some token of regret, a remembrance to bring back the way it had been. But the summer fashions had passed. Even the shop wasn't there, just a large department store where I could only find a beige sweater set. And when I reached her father's house with it, she walked away without a word.

"I didn't know how we could do anything else."

"It's not your fault."

"We should've had it."

"No, this way is better."

Still she didn't put on the sweater set.

The following morning a dead mouse was under the kitchen table. The cat looked proud of herself. But when I went to stroke her, she hissed and nearly scratched me.

Soon I waited again in the anteroom with the peeling walls. There was a moan, then another and another. A few minutes passed silently before the doctor opened the door.

"That was nothing," he said. "Just too soon for such a strong treatment. It'll take a few more days yet."

Roberta took me into his office to show me a newly-arrived medical exhibit. A thirteen-week-old human fetus, umbilical cord and placenta lay intact in a large glass jar placed like a paperweight on his desk. The doctor explained:

"This belonged to a woman of thirty-five. She couldn't afford it and didn't want it. Thirteen weeks is often too late, only not in this case since she'd had a couple of children already. Being in labor previously makes it easier. You can see how smoothly the whole thing came out. Exactly nine days. She caught it in

the jar herself yesterday. I'll have to get rid of it, though; my wife likes to drop by unexpectedly."

I called her from uptown on Saturday. It was the twelfth day — colder, grayer, harsher.

"I'll call you back later," she said.

"I'll come over."

"No."

"I don't understand."

"You never do! Don't you know I'm having a miscarriage now?"

Sunday she stayed in bed. I brought a yellow rose. She held my hand with a tender smile of relief.

"Last night my father came in twice to ask if he should call his doctor. Then this morning he insisted, and I couldn't refuse. But his doctor only said I was exhausted and needed rest."

"I'm exhausted too."

"I doubted you lately. I doubted you the whole time."

We still had our secret, though now a different one. She'd kept her suffering all to herself and I'd not breathed a word of mine.

Wednesday (the 13th)

dear David —

again we are separated and our anniversary is hard

to believe in. Yet how strong we are in spite of everything. How much happens to test us, to tease and taunt — we are played with (both from inside and out) and so have no time for play. The rose is reflected in the mirror from where it stands in a glass of salt water on the chiffonier, symbolic of our being one while appearing to be two.

Just these few words for now. I have much to tell you, but first I need to be alone. Perhaps it's better you won't be coming in this weekend, it will give me more time. I'll try to write soon. Take care of what you do there. You are my past, my present . . .

Roberta

the seventeenth

More days in no-man's-land. They still have me swinging back and forth from hot war to cold, from chemical, bacteriological and radiological offense to psychological defense. And at certain weary moments when falling into the rhythm of it is easier than fighting it off — we might be returning from the firing range with the company band playing *When the Saints Go Marching In* — I even have to resist wanting to be no more than part of the machine. Actually,

all I do is imagine my own kind of saints. Their numerous mechanized ones submit piously to every order, believing and belonging. But my few guerillas rebel impiously, not believing and not belonging.

In any case it's been a healing time for us. There was lots of rain here lately, and this last week out on bivouac I almost froze to death. Once I thought, in fact hoped, that I was going to be caked in ice and then pushed by the leaden sky into the sodden earth where I'd remain for thousands of years in suspended animation. I wouldn't have minded staying there that long without feeling.

But yesterday the sun came out, warm enough for the start of Indian summer, and I melted until I could feel you were melting too. I've even been wondering since what would have happened if we hadn't kept everything to ourselves. Most likely they would have insisted you have the child and offered to help, which would have been just what we didn't want. They would have pretended the little they knew was all there was. We must be different later when we're ready for a child.

I have a confession. I'm longing to touch you again, to be even more careless than we were before. Forgive me if I sound flippant. Words are never true to feelings. What I write is like the line of shortest

distance between two points on the earth's surface, a line that must be drawn straight on paper but in reality is curved.

Tuesday nite

dear David —

I've been lying here looking at my body, trying to get back on intimate terms with myself after all the changes . . . the freshness has gone, leaving my skin much oilier than usual, and the fullness receded so that I look angular, barren. My body has grown pale and thin like a waning moon, almost denying the existence of a lover (the existence of the sun?).

Going to that doctor was horrible for me. I once saw a roach crawling on his jacket, his fingernails were dirty, being touched by him (more than necessary) sent quivers of revulsion through me. Toward the end the mere sight of him — his shortness — turned my stomach. There was something diseased about him . . . he was overgrown inside. Or else he was just sterile and destroyed what he couldn't have. The yellow splotches on the ceiling made me think I was lying on a table in the city morgue. At the same time it was no more than a cliche, a grotesque, meaningless cliche, and that was the worst. That will

make it even harder to get over. So you must be patient with me.

I didn't want a child now and never worried if what we were doing was immoral. But I did wonder what that child might become which no other would. I felt something was being wasted, lost instead of gained — even time, experience? I wish I could describe what it is like for a woman to go through such a thing. Only how could you ever understand about uterine cramps and vaginal contractions, about the total emptiness after it was over? All I hope is that you at least sympathized with my need to be alone then. I wasn't sure any longer what I wanted or what I was.

Husband, lover or simply friend, our very closeness is a problem. Even now I'm not sure if I can or want to be a woman, go on studying, both or neither. Actually I've never been too sure, and that is why I do strange things, act selfish and cold. Yet we never had a learning time, and that is also why — we should have married more knowingly than either of us did. You're right about our being too secretive with each other and perhaps each of us with himself. But now that you're away we can't do much except keep our secrets. The weekend passes are short and strained (my heart drops at the thought of them). The army

makes the situation more difficult for both of us. Still I ask no more than for you to have patience. Later we'll be free to tell our secrets, it's only a matter of time . . .

weekend days

When I came unexpectedly into the city that afternoon the clouds were draped again like a shroud across the sky. I decided to look some more for the shop of the dark green blouse. For I still wanted to make things up to her, to hold on to the way it had been. And after walking far downtown I found the missing place. I'd simply looked too far uptown before. The blouse itself was no longer in the window. Yet they hadn't all been sold and the male clerk got one out of stock — the last in her size. It was of silk shantung with a French label. But this time when I reached her father's house, she wasn't even there.

"Stay awhile anyway," Michael said.

"Do you expect her back soon?"

"No, but my father would like to speak to you."

He was sitting in the worn red-and-yellow armchair by the television set in the livingroom. His eyes were closed and his head hung at an unnatural

angle on his shoulder. His limbs also hung unnaturally, his legs in a perfectly straight line from his trunk to the floor and his arms almost as rigidly over the sides. His body had lost its sap and was stiffening at the joints like a tree with branches too dry to bend. His was a being which life had turned to wood. And the years in concentric rings under his flesh had only brought him back to a collegiate football game.

It was halftime, a corps of cadets parading with drums on the field. Michael shut off the set, and he woke up with a start that made his whole body jerk. For a few moments we just looked at each other.

"How are you, David? In for long?"

"Just the weekend. I must be disturbing you — "

"No, but my daughter has gone off somewhere. She left this morning with some fellow in a car and won't be back until tomorrow."

I felt myself turn pale both at discovering and being discovered.

"Why don't you sit down? I'd like to ask you if there's anything serious between you and Bobbie. I'm very worried about her, you see. A man has to worry about his daughter, especially when she has no mother, no woman around to act as an example. I've also spoken to Bobbie about your relationship. She would only say she was fond of you, but I think it's more

than that. The two of you are in love, aren't you?"

"I suppose."

Something was about to happen against my will, something that at the same time I was willing to let happen.

"I've no objections to people being in love, of course. But they have to act like normal, decent people. Everybody gets sick or has problems at times, so they go to a doctor whether a general practitioner or a psychiatrist. Only they don't start doing whatever they feel like just because they're sick or have problems. How would it be if everybody did what they wanted to? There wouldn't be any order to anything and having problems or getting sick would have a purpose, which isn't right. That's only common sense. When people are in love, they get married — it's the same as a law. It's like one of the ten commandments. And if people don't get married, there's something wrong. They can't really be in love."

Michael was sitting and waiting in the other red-and-yellow armchair, waiting for his father to force the issue.

"I have to be concerned, she's my daughter. I'm not blind. I've seen the last few weeks something isn't right. If the two of you have problems you can't

solve now, maybe I could help. Who can people go to except their father? I'm not a rich man, but I could help a little. I've told Bobbie I would, although she says she doesn't need my help. I don't understand how she can say that when she's still in school and wants to go on. There's a limit to how long a person can go to school, especially a woman. Some day you have to get married and raise a family or at least start to work for a living."

The tide carried him along just like a piece of flotsam, but I was drifting away in a cold fog.

"We're not worried about it."

"Even so you have to support yourselves."

"That's not a problem today."

And he asked me again what I expected to do. And I tried to explain about studying philosophy and finding out later, though he still didn't understand a word of it.

"After all, David, marriage is more than love. Everybody who gets married is in love. But what then? Those feelings don't last, and if they do you still can't get by on them. There are responsibilities. To keep a family together you have to be strong. You can't just allow your wife to go off with other men. I never allowed that to my wife. I never let her get into any situation where she could be tempted by another

man, and you shouldn't let Bobbie. You shouldn't let her even where the other man is your best friend. As her husband you have to protect her, which means you also have to protect her from herself."

He floated on the surface in a state of decay, rotting more with each ebb and flow.

"Bobbie is capable of taking care of herself. Even if we were married, she'd be free to do what she liked. And however it worked out, it would work out. In any case — "

"You have to be a man."

"— we'll let you know something more definite in two or three weeks."

So he said they'd tell her if she called that I was in the city, and I put the green blouse on her chiffonier. In her room the cat leapt away from me and stared down from the wardrobe top out of reach.

Then Michael followed me out of the apartment, catching up in the lobby to force the issue further. His father knew already, though he wasn't sure how, his father knew we were married already. He himself knew from the rings she and I wore, he had known from the very first. Yet that didn't matter, only what his father knew mattered because it was making the old man sick again.

I merely asked him how his father knew, but he

insisted he wasn't sure. His father knew and had to be told before he had an attack and died, that was the important thing. And as there was nothing left to hide I admitted it, saying we would tell his father soon enough. The secret had fermented, everything gone past the point of keeping.

October moved to an end. I waited for her in its last hours, trying at her father's house, but she neither called nor came. There is no end to waiting, it simply circles round like the time of day. A sober morning passed, a forlorn afternoon, the impatient evening chasing them toward midnight.

I was guilty of putting indiscreet questions to her dark-haired friend on the phone. She answered indifferently that Roberta needed someone strong and had always said so herself. I called my medical student friend, but his wife said they'd just separated and she didn't know where he was. Soon the thought of Roberta with someone else carried me from fear to folly. Perhaps my friend had betrayed me with her, that small stature of his she'd once found irksome, that very smallness taking her away.

Separated from myself and not knowing where I was, I looked in her bureau drawer for some reuniting thing. All my letters were there along with her lecture notes and a memorandum among them that her

love was of the nomadic kind and could never stay in one place too long. I put the memorandum through the French label of the green blouse as if the words were mine.

Only then I waited in the moonless street to tell her they weren't true for either of us. A figure stood in the dark shadows on the other side — was he an old lover or even my friend, was he waiting for her too? But before long the street was empty, and I let the emptiness have its way.

NOVEMBER

10:30 pm (special delivery)

David —

Today is the 1st, but I want to write as though it were still last month. I didn't forget that your birthday is tomorrow. Only I had no chance to say anything about it on the phone since we both were so busy explaining. But I haven't gotten you anything... I need more time.

I'm not good for very much, birthdays least of all.

I hope you're not too disillusioned. Changing the date for your sake is much easier than changing the situation for my father's, and I can't even change the date to any effect. The cashmere sweater I wanted to buy hasn't been bought because I couldn't use the money from the last army check when I hadn't been a good army wife to you (even before the weekend). The money for a gift, for something you can wear on autumn days when we walk in the leaves, must be money I've worked for. It must come from my pay check so that we'll know I gave you just such a number of hours . . .

I'm not good for very much.

Roberta

the second

The world is catching up with us, dearest. It is about to impose its laws, laws we can't live by. Not that we love each other too little but differently from what they allow. Strange that there should be laws against our desires, though we always knew there were. The thing is we never had to take those laws seriously before and now we do. Before they were just as unreal as they were unnatural while now they are just as real. The police are already closing in.

Yet I'm letting my fears run away with me. Somehow or other we'll stay free, clear of all the agents of the unnatural, unhindered by the police or the army or even the military surplus dealers like your father and the drug and cosmetic dealers like mine. I make a resolution for both of us: to grow beyond the compromises of the social order, the compromises of every time and place. We'll belong only to the sun or what is reflected of it in the moon, only to life where there are no restrictions, where death isn't legal in any guise. And if necessary, we'll die for that. But first we'll have a child. You'll be resting on the bed with your eyes closed and the line of your neck flowing out of your hair will draw me down.

days on end

Dressed too lightly, I was hunched up from the cold. Her eyes had begun to tear. Under a streetlamp I could see the tears like ice on her face. We wanted to speak but couldn't. In speaking we violated our own sanctuary, and remorse at that had already frozen our tongues.

Her father had been dying, had resumed his slow and painful dying. Some muscles tightened around

the smaller passages in his lungs, making his breath come shorter and straining his heart. Since my arrival on leave in the afternoon she'd smoked a whole pack of cigarettes and almost bitten past the quick of her nails. I'd shifted around impatiently. Oxygen and drugs were being administered in his room. Then as he was resting easier the telephone rang; it was her old lover in the army, long-distance. She hung up after a few minutes in a flaring rage.

"So he knows too. He found out from somebody you must have told; I had to deny it ten times over. But it's too late now — you even told Michael when he didn't really know because you want my father to die."

And out of equally flaring spite I said it was true.

Under the streetlamp, I could see the tears like ice on her face. She took my arm, saving us from more words.

Yet the next day her father was breathing shorter again.

We lay with the cat on her bed until his doctor arrived. Aunt Jessie, his sister, was already there. They wanted to speak to Roberta alone so I waited for her in the living room.

Her voice was calm but the doctor's rose and fell. He used both threatening and coaxing tones. Her

father's life was in danger because of what we were hiding, or at least because of our hiding it. Then her voice rose, breaking off sharply, and she came out all tensed.

"Stay here, I've something to explain when this is over — though I can tell you now I have to divorce you."

She went into her father's room with the doctor and her aunt. The three of them kept asking her to admit we were married but she more and more shrilly refused. I walked up and down the hall, wanting to go in and admit it for her. At the same time I merely watched from a distance. I watched from a certain height and saw myself always stop, slightly faint, at the door.

Soon the doctor left expressionless, her aunt following with a troubled look. Roberta spoke in a low voice to her father. I didn't know whether to stay or go. I stood there without moving through a long silence, until finally she came back out.

"Let me finish before you say anything. It's important you understand first. I know what I must do."

"You're making it worse like this."

Something in me was close to breaking, if only within something else that was unbreakable.

"My father couldn't sleep last night and had another attack. If that happens again it'll be the end. I can't be responsible. I can't be married to you now. I have to be like a wife to him. I have to take care of him, he needs me. I don't hate him, not anymore. He's alone with Michael away at school. And I'm going to stay with him. No one else can. Aunt Jessie can't, and — "

"Why don't you just tell him? That's all he wants."

"Listen! You simply must listen!"

She had lost direction and wanted desperately to go back, not caring about the tide.

"The doctor spoke to my father about analysis. I want to start again and my father agreed to pay. He'll pay for any analyst I like. But he insists I live here and I couldn't live here if he knew I was married. I don't feel I have to escape any longer. Still I couldn't live the way he'd want me to then. You shouldn't have told Michael, he told my father you told him. That's why my father thinks he knows already. That's why he's sick and needs me to take care of him. Anyway I'm not much good to you now, and even in analysis I wouldn't be. Too much hate has to come out, which wouldn't be fair to you. I already find myself hating you sometimes. It's not your fault, you don't know what you feel or want yourself. But that's what makes

everything so hard for me. I can't stand the pressure your being in the army puts on me. I can't stand any pressure at all. I've been feeling this way since the miscarriage, but it was there before too. Maybe I never loved you. Maybe I only married you to hurt my father, I don't know. In any case I can't control myself anymore. So you have to divorce me now. And by the time you're out of the army I'll feel stronger. We'll both feel stronger and even want to marry again."

In her panic she was clinging to his wreckage, forgetting that the tide led nowhere.

"Denying everything won't help. Your father knew before I told Michael. He found out on his own. He must have looked in your bureau and read my letters."

"No, don't touch me!"

"But you don't have to stay here to have analysis. You could move out. We'd manage it somehow. You'd have the army checks for —"

"That's just what I don't want! No, don't touch me, I don't want you to touch me, I don't even want to see you again!"

Suddenly the thing broke inside me. I was falling into the water there and would drown, I was pleading with her not to end it, saying I loved her more than she knew, more than I knew myself. Finally she lashed

out and hit me, slapping me with both her hands until her own tears stopped her. Then she let me hold her, let me hold onto her and take her back. She remembered and let herself be taken back to the other thing in me that was unbreakable. So we both grew quiet and hearing only one another's breathing, we became oblivious to her father's.

Still the rest of the days our trust in each other kept lessening. It weakened from one negation to the next and soon nothing at all remained.

I met her at first for lunches at the College where she was conducting experiments in autokineticism. She even did one on me.

And I took a room downtown in a hotel for her to come there to me, though she only came there with me twice. She wrote to my parents' house for the thirteenth —

David, three . . .
months (of trial)
people (one left untried)
secrets (to be told)

Yet that was all, our possibilities become fewer, swallowed into the orbit of the earth. She couldn't stay the night because he would know if she did. Her father was walking around already.

And although she had no money she would take

none from me for fear of its being an obligation. She borrowed some instead from the homosexual pharmacist.

Then one evening she said to me:

"Please, I can't be your wife, I can't be responsible. It's not I don't love you, simply that I don't want to be married."

I told her I'd arrange for the army to send me overseas. But she cried no, it wouldn't be enough, she had to have a divorce. The doorbell rang at that moment. Her dark-haired friend had been passing by and just wanted to say she'd moved in with her middle-aged lover. Her eyes were as jade-green, her air as jaded as ever. Our words stopped again, and we even went in desire to the hotel.

The following night I waited for her to meet me there, but she didn't come.

I paid the pharmacist two afternoons later, looking for her afterwards in her father's house. He was alone with his nurse and asked me to sit down.

"I know you and Bobbie are married, David. I can't explain how I found out, but that's not important. The trouble is I have no idea if you'd like me to send out announcements or inform people some other way. There are a number of friends and relatives who have to know also. I've been trying right along to

get Bobbie to admit you're married, only she no longer answers me. She refuses to talk about it. On the other hand she doesn't deny it anymore, which is something."

"She doesn't deny it anymore because she wants a divorce."

"But she can't get a divorce, at least not by herself with you in the army. You mustn't give her one. She'll change her mind before long. The fact is I went through a similar crisis with my wife in the beginning. She wanted to go back to work shortly after Bobbie was born, to have a career because she thought that would be living her own life. And I refused even though she threatened to leave. I couldn't agree to her not doing her duty either to the child or me. Then she forgot about it, and we were happy enough up to the time she died. A man can't just let his wife do whatever she wants. Bobbie can have analysis, I'll pay for it. But she has to live here and act like a married woman. I won't close my eyes to promiscuity. She has to acknowledge you openly as her husband if she wants my help."

"She won't stay if there are any conditions."

"In that case she has to leave. But whatever she does you mustn't give her a divorce. By law you don't have to, and I know you don't want to."

"No, I don't want to."

Someone she called in the morning made up with her to meet that night. I was standing near the phone and she realized I could hear, but her words were meant to wound me.

We sat on a bench down on the boulevard. She wished she were free and nothing more. So I told her what her father and I had said, only that I was willing to divorce her, that we could never live together anyhow. Then she apologized for her words, she didn't understand herself, we'd marry again when things were different.

She called me toward evening. She'd just come from her dark-haired friend, having cried and talked for hours because she didn't know what to do. I went back to look for her down on the boulevard. She hadn't even been sure where she was calling from. I ran up to her crossing a street with a very short man, but she turned into a hare-lipped stranger when I began to speak.

The next day she said she'd called a second time when I was out but I knew it was a lie. We had no grounds for annulment in the almanac, and a divorce lawyer explained the necessary steps. We decided to wait awhile. She found a room near the College. It was the night before she was to move.

"You promised not to divorce her. She's leaving because she thinks you will."

"I didn't promise, but whether I did or not I've changed my mind. I want one now myself."

"David won't do it, Bobbie. He still loves you too much."

"How do you know everything? Do you think you're God?"

"At least I believe in God."

"That means you think you are God since any God you believed in would have to be the same as you!"

"You don't want to stay here as David's wife. That means you're going to be immoral."

"You're the one who's immoral! You looked in my bureau and read my letters. That's how you found out we were married. You don't even know what immorality is!"

"The letters were lying all over the house. You couldn't expect me not to read them if you left them around like that. Besides, I thought you wanted me to read them. Your analyst last year told me why you did such things."

"She didn't know why I did anything, she couldn't. She didn't know any more about me than you do. It wasn't analysis anyway, it was a farce. And you want the same thing to —"

"Don't answer him."

"— happen all over again! He wants me to go back to my old analyst so he can call up and find out if I'm a virgin!"

"You're the one who wants to go back into analysis."

"Just don't answer, you're moving out anyway, or –"

"Make him stop butting in, Aunt Jessie, please —"

"You butted in, Bobbie, I was talking to David, I —"

"— he'll never stop!"

"— make him stop!"

"— don't have to stop!"

"Let me talk to them, you'll die from this."

"Don't divorce her, David."

"I hate him."

His sister sat with us at the kitchen table. She said it was his nature, he couldn't help himself and would never change, that Roberta's mother had understood it when she'd made up her mind to stay, caring for him despite his jealousy in a maternal way. And a divorce might be a mistake, for surely when we'd married we loved one another. But Roberta answered that as long as she was in her father's house she could love only the cat.

I helped her to move, the days thinned out, last

leaves quicksilver on the walks. The sun burned in my eyes with a cold flame. We put all her belongings in my family's car.

"The cat has to be killed," she cried. "I can't take care of her now and he says she can't stay here, though he knows she couldn't live anywhere else. And he won't let you back into his house, he keeps calling you a degenerate. He's my father, I'll forgive him many things, but never in my whole life this."

We drove to the animal pound. The cat dug her paws into Roberta's coat. A man carried her inside to the gas chamber.

The room near the College was drearier than it had seemed, sharing the bathroom on the floor with five. Roberta had misgivings about taking a shower there and I held the terry cloth robe she used for getting dry.

We went out for a walk and dinner. She thought her aunt was probably right. She'd heal by being alone awhile and then meet me at my parents' on Thanksgiving.

Yet the father had already devoured the cat. Already I had to go back to the army. The hours of each mind measure in a different glass, a different instrument of doing and undoing, and in mine there they seeped down like separate days. The thing which

had broken in me started to split open. I saw her before it was time.

She was at the mirror painting her eyes green while on the bed behind the open door sat an older man. They spoke only repartee — young love was always fragile, a decoration of other needs, a mere filigree — and I spoke barely at all.

On Thanksgiving it snowed as if already winter. She came as she had promised, but we made each other ill-at-ease and tense. In the evening she had to be elsewhere. And finally giving it up, I went to stand for a performance of a nineteenth-century French opera. The golden curtain rose. The music sweetly pulsed. Systole, diastole, it beat with my heart inside me, beating slower and slower until I fainted dead away.

A PRAYER TO THE SUBWAY

To my wife, Francoise, for her birthday

Thomas Krampf

Our Father lost forever underground.
Our Father forever hurtling through sight and sound
Our Father forever lurching with a drunken throat.
Our Father forever consorting with the Holy Ghost.
Our Father forever snarling with his wicked fangs.
Our Father forever slashing deeply with his sunken teeth.
Our Father forever lashing painfully with a screaming harlot's tongue.
Our Faher forever twisting seductively with his long metallic body.
Grant us the beauty of eternal wisdom.
Grant us the kindness of eternal peace.

It's a long time now since I first entered the subway.
It's a long time now since I first descended into the bowels of the earth.
It's a long time now since I first stood idle against the white-tiled walls.
It's a long time now since I first called the monster from his darkened pit.

It's a long time now since I first leaned back
while he plunged past me.
It's a long time now since I first felt
his hatred's gleaming fury.
It's a long time now since I first watched his teeth
strike at my throat.
It's a long time now since I first recoiled
from his fur scurrying to its berth.
It's a long time now since I first entered
his heaving flanks.
It's a long time now since I first penetrated
his heavy scales.
It's a long time now since I first sat with the others
against his walls.
It's a long time now since I first joined them
even against my will.
It's a long time now since I first felt the water's
terrifying pressure.
It's a long time now since I first knew relief
emerging from the river.
It's a long time now since I first questioned
where I was going.
It's a long time now since I first suspected
there was only one answer.
It's a long time now since I first attained
the other bank.
It's a long time now since I first saw people waiting
between the girders.

It's a long time now since I first wanted to beckon
them to get on.
It's a long time now since I first realized
few of them would.
It's a long time now since I first continued uptown
on the journey.
It's a long time now since I first understood
the rail's solitary fire.
It's a long time now since I first witnessed others
standing on the platform.
It's a long time now since I first glimpsed electricity's
flashing beauty.

Our Father lost forever underground.
Our Father forever hurtling through sight and sound.
Our Father of the Holy Grail.
Our Father of the burning rail.
Our Father of the single track.
Our Father who takes us there and brings us back.
Our Father who proudly makes us lift up
the chalice of the City.
Our Father who gently permits us to strip aside
her veil.
Our Father who challenges us to know what
we shouldn't know.
Our Father who teaches us finally how to repent.
Our Father who promises to return all of us to dust.

Our Father who promises us salvation if only
we learn how to forgive.
Our Father who has supremely molded our faces
from clay and dirt.
Our Father who has wisely let us roam
in our own tunnel's roaring destruction.
Grant us the charity of your eternal wisdom.
Grant us the freedom of those who know how
to forgive.

Sometimes in a fury I would wander through the City.
Sometimes in a rage I would seek relief from
the darkness of despair.
Sometimes without hope I would enter
the cathedral of the subway.
Sometimes without faith I would listen to its
solitary prayer.
Sometimes I would completely surrender
to wherever it took me.
Sometimes I sought love in a dimension
I was still too young to know.
Sometimes I rode for hours while searching for the
unknown.
Sometimes I was never sure I was going to make it
home.
Sometimes I crossed the slender dikes into
Far Rockaway.

Sometimes I sat with Flatbush mothers
watching their children in parks.
Sometimes I was as stunned as them
in the burning playground sun.
Sometimes I left the wire enclosures because there was
no place left to go.
Sometimes in desolation I reached the outskirts
of the City.
Sometimes in consolation I walked through orange
mountains of piled dirt.
Sometimes I wandered back through factories nobody
spoke to anymore.
Sometimes I conversed with mistrustful and
abandoned subway cars.
Sometimes I stood on the last sweeping perimeter
of civilization.
Sometimes I watched planes darting like
hummingbirds over the drunken reeds.
Sometimes I suspected the marshland's dirty and
supplicating intentions.
Sometimes I detected weeds advancing disguised
to take it all back.
Sometimes I rose to the towering heights of
Fort Tryon Park.
Sometimes I gazed across the Hudson from
the medieval Cloisters.
Sometimes I pleaded for a glittering peace
from the Palisades Amusement Park.

Sometimes I begged for the gauze of mercy from
some dead Indian's soul.
Sometimes I descended under the long streets
dipping into Harlem.
Sometimes I emerged into the canyons cutting
between the smouldering hills.
Sometimes I walked the length of the valley
and raised my face in greeting.
Sometimes my unknown darker brother lifted his head
and kindly answered me.
Sometimes I returned home far more exhausted
than I had come.
Sometimes I heard the subway's organ playing
a solemn cathedral tune.
Sometimes I attempted to lift my head and
accompany the sacred hymn.
Sometimes I realized I wouldn't always
be entirely, entirely alone.

Our Father lost forever underground.
Our Father forever hurtling through sight and sound
Our Father who sometimes bursts in joy from
the sweltering earth.
Our Father who sometimes trundles happily down
wooden tracks.
Our Father who knows all the rooftops of the world.

Our Father who watches lovers kissing behind
half-drawn windows.
Our Father who knows the laundry bundles strung
by all the poor.
Our Father who whisks by all the rich churches
supposed to save them.
Our Father who cannot deny the bleached and faded
cloth of poverty.
Our Father who casts chunks of brilliant sunlight
through elevated tracks.
Our Father who knows each shadow stepping over
the whispering pavement.
Our Father who can enter all the neighborhoods
without fear.
Grant us the dignity of the suffering poor.
Grant us the courage to save the world for all
our children.

Junky Jesus enters, enters the train.
Junky Jesus is tapping, tapping his cane.
Junky Jesus is rapping, rapping the ground
with his stick.
Junky Jesus is rocking, rocking better than any
blind man could.
Junky Jesus has a sign hanging, hanging around
his neck.
Junky Jesus has dark glasses tilted, tilted on his nose.

Junky Jesus has a sweet angelic smile, smile of repose.
Junky Jesus is gently beating a rhythm, rhythm
with his metal cup.
Junky Jesus is always rattling, rattling an old tin pot.
Junky Jesus almost bangs his head, his head against
a pole.
Junky Jesus always nods, nods in thanks when
you throw a quarter in.
Junky Jesus never blinks, blinks his eyes to see
how much it is.
Junky Jesus does a fantastic, fantastic little dance.
Junky Jesus waits to empty money, money into
his pants.
Junky Jesus somehow, somehow reaches the end
of the lurching car.
Junky Jesus knows just how to cross over without
ever, ever falling.
Junky Jesus has made all the people, people smile.
Junky Jesus has amused them all, all with his
funny act.
Junky Jesus has gotten better laughs, laughs than
on Broadway.
Junky Jesus will make you pay, pay if you take
the same train back.
Junky Jesus is terribly tired now after a long, long
day.
Junky Jesus staggers into, into a terrified
white man's arms.

Junky Jesus kindly, kindly lets him help him
across the speeding tracks.
Junky Jesus makes the white man proudly,
proudly help his first poor black.

Our Father lost forever underground.
Our Father forever hurtling through sight and sound.
Our Father of the lumbering B M T
Our Father of the slashing I R T
Our Father of the savage I N D
Our Father of the painful and dull-witted
crosstown shuttle.
Our Father who takes us screaming into the darker
neighborhoods.
Our Father who slashes like a silver knife
through the flirting stations.
Our Father who penetrates where we do not go
for fear.
Our Father who purifies every layer of the
dirt-caked girders.
Our Father who caresses every form slouched
against the darkened walls.
Our Father who knows by heart every letter of
the blood-red graffiti.
Our Father who dares to stop where we do not.
Our Father who knows the passage from dark
into light.

Our Father who knows the voyage from despair
into hope.
Our Father who knows that the human soul can
never have any color.
Our Father who doesn't fear the great elongated
stations of our darker brothers.
Grant us freedom from the hatred of our skins.
Grant us liberty from the divisions of our hearts.

Feliciana, I should have gone with you to the Bronx.
Feliciana, I should have turned off with your
speeding subway eyes.
Feliciana, I should have taken the flashing
intersection of your look.
Feliciana, I should have fled with your tenderness
up the burning tracks.
Feliciana, it's strange how we knew each other so
completely in that moment.
Feliciana, it's strange how you lifted the lilting
blue shutters of your eyes.
Feliciana, it's strange how you left the train
knowing I couldn't follow you.
Feliciana, it's strange how you let a smile of
kindness pervade your lips.
Feliciana, it's also strange how you gathered
the child into your arms.

Feliciana, it's also strange how your body might be
swollen with another form.
Feliciana, it's also strange how you knew we shall
grow old before our time.
Feliciana, it's also strange how nobody can accuse us
of not having lived.
Feliciana, is it because we both carry such flaws
both inside and out?
Feliciana, is it because we both have made all the
errors with yet more to come?
Feliciana, is it because we both have lost
the terrible gift of something?
Feliciana, is it because we both finally were forced
to accept what happened?
Feliciana, I should have gone with you to the Bronx.
Feliciana, I should have turned off with your eyes
speeding down the subway tracks.
Feliciana, I should have quickly transferred at the
intersection of your smile.
Feliciana, I didn't because now both of us are
old enough to know better.
Feliciana, I don't know whether eternity shall
remember us.
Feliciana, I don't know whether at this point both
of us even care.
Feliciana, I don't know whether we shall ever
meet again.

Feliciana, I don't know whether we would recognize
each other even if we did.
Feliciana, but there is only one way the retiring
world can always greet you.
Feliciana, but there is only one way the blind
universe can perceive your stance.
Feliciana, but there is only one person who saw
your courageous subway glance.
Feliciana, but there is only one unknown poet
who remembered to sing about it.

Our Father lost forever underground.
Our Father forever hurtling through sight and sound.
Our Father of the settling dusk.
Our Father of the slumbering smog.
Our Father who mounts forever on the
forbidden bridges.
Our Father who creeps forever towards the
buried sounds.
Our Father who is a packaged string of lights
trundling across the bay.
Our Father who protects those huddled lonely
under advertisements inside.
Our Father who knows the City's full fury when
the smog is swept away.
Our Father who doesn't fear the unhooded buildings
and their greed.

Our Father who knows the spirit's light has
nothing to do with electricity.
Our Father who watches the sinking sun festooned
across the rippling waters.
Our Father who hides his emblazoned face behind
clouds so that none can see.
Our Father who joyfully plays with the
tiny carnival lights of ferryboats.
Our Father who answers sturdy tugboats when
they hoot their last farewell.
Our Father who stabilizes the listing grime of
overloaded coal-barges.
Our Father who accompanies nightwatchmen
while they punch defective clocks.
Our Father who pulls shadows over bright containers
bundled on the dock.
Our Father who remains alone above the throne of
all darkness.
Grant us the sanctity of your kingdom.
Grant us the honor of your love.

Now the streets are descending.
Now they are taking me back where I belong.
Now will I no longer suffer from sudden panic on
the Second Avenue Shuttle.
Now will I no longer be returned to the
Melanie Cleaners against my will.

Now will I no longer be scuttled back to the neon
lights from which I just came.
Now will I no longer know the bodies' heat packed
together in the steaming cars.
Now will I no longer search for the sad eyes that
once befriended me.
Now will I no longer ask the darkening rooftops
for an obscure peace.
Now will I no longer forget disgruntled girders
striding above crumpled shops.
Now will I no longer forget playground children
and their devastated cries.
Now will I no longer forget an old preacher friend
who refused to see me.
Now will I no longer forget that Easter can have
an unholy and discordant note.
Now will I no longer forget the girl's ebony skin
on the crosstown transfer bus.
Now will I no longer forget how the driver
devoured her with admiring eyes.
Now will I no longer forget my friend lying sick
and paralyzed in the hospital.
Now will I no longer forget the unqualified love
and strength he has given me.
Now the streets are descending.
Now they are taking me back home where I belong.
Now I shall descend from the sky into the earth's
white-tiled corridors.

Now I shall rush with the others through the
universe's clicking turnstiles.
Now I shall be supremely patient and not take
whatever train comes along.
Now I shall be kind and no longer question a
slow-moving vehicle's wisdom.
Now I shall be compassionate and no longer speak
unless I'm spoken to.
Now I shall be humble and no longer ask about
the ground's untold mysteries.
Now I shall be profound and enter with the others
into the long-awaited Local.
Now I shall be gentle and take my place
next to them on the hard pink benches.
Now I shall be strong and breathing deeply
wish them the very best of luck.
Now I shall be truthful and only ask for them
to do the very best they can.
Now slowly the numbers are diminishing
as surely we leave this alien land.
Now slowly we settle back as surely the graffiti
becomes the swiftest blur.
Now slowly we know what surely we should have
known many long years ago.
Now slowly we must learn to be patient
for a voyage we are all sure to take.
Now certainly I shall no longer race children
to the head of the lurching car.

Now certainly I shall no longer stand at the window
watching the flashing rails.
Now certainly I shall no longer take comfort
in the tunnel's twisting girders.
Now certainly I shall no longer ask to follow
any ancient track but one.
Now serenely I shall prepare to take
the next Express train Brooklyn bound.
Now painfully I shall listen to the Harsh Lady's
incomprehensible voice.
Now skillfully I shall step over the movable
platform's clashing teeth.
Now joyfully I shall once again settle down
as swiftly doors close behind me.
Now happily I shall admire the man with three
daughters and a Patagonian hat.
Now quickly I shall wonder how dark his mustache
while one child has red hair.
Now suddenly I shall see stations fluttering
like butterflies with neon wings.
Now mysteriously I shall accept no man can know
how many dimensions there are.
Now peacefully I shall pass under the river
with pressurized water seeping in.
Now fortunately I shall start salvation's slow climb
up the last long hill.
Now anxiously I shall soon walk home
under a flowering Spring's junky stars.

Now gratefully I shall understand a single Summer
leaf knows far more than I do.

Our Father lost forever underground.
Our Father forever hurtling through sight and sound.
Our Father of the faint solitary beauty
of the morning star.
Our Father forever grumbling
through the awakening dawn.
Our Father who forever enters rumbling
into the Heralded Golden City.
Our Father where all the building towers
are capped in shining bronze.
Our Father where the driving sun
reflects off the purest tones of glass.
Our Father where the spirit's love
is an unknown transparent substance.
Our Father where the moving escalators
climb like fallen morning dew.
Our Father where the sweetest nectar drunk
is faith's slow ascension.
Our Father where our shadows sprout like vines
from his clinging hand.
Our Father who forever watches us
from a million overhanging balconies.
Our Father who forever lets us reach
the mysterious terrace of unending love.

Our Father who forever sits outside of Time
so that we may remain within.
Our Father who succors all of us if only we
are courageous enough to ask him.
Our Father who forever places within our beings
the Truth of prior goodness.
Our Father whose flaming rays ignite
the darkest canyons between buildings.
Our Father who forever gives us each Spring
morning's gently quivering peace.
Our Father who forever requests us each to remain
in humble silence before it.
Our Father who forever chooses the words
our mouths have finally spoken.
Grant us forever the mercy of your supreme wisdom.
Grant us forever the simple beauty of all our love.

OUT OF THE DEPTHS

Dilys Bennett Laing

I

There are things the blood remembers
for knowing which the brain is still too young.
The blood speaks, in the arterial chambers,
of circumstance forgotten and shapes that sprang
from chaos and subsided into jungle
long before life was mammal. We can place
no seal upon them, and the mind can angle
deep for an answer and hook no guess.

II

The measured form, the artificial pattern
of fugue and sonnet from the dark flow forth
even as the feathers of the speckled bittern,
even as the fern upfronded from the earth.
Ocean and planet, iron and hair and blood
spring not more certain out of mystery's womb
than speech or music or the myth of god
reared from the chasm of the human dream.

TO A NORSEMAN
— FROM AN ISLANDER —

Patricia Livingston

Surely you have forgotten
that poets are as wild as Norsemen,
that dancers and players flamboyantly rash
and flutists and pluckers of strings
are full of ungovernable dreams;
surely no tall and silver-mouthed singer
will leave off
once she has begun to call a tale
out of her harp.
Have you forgotten
those dragon-boated rievers
shouting over the cold North Sea
and revelling with these island-dwellers
in their pillaging?
Have you forgotten
those earth-gods of the old world?
Twelve disciples to a coven:
those blonde-haired witch consorters,
drumming in the dusk of tall clearings,
calling the cloven-footed fairies
out to spin in the moonlight.

Surely you had not thought
that saints had quieted their longings
or holy scholars curbed their willful wantonness.
Though all the snakes were damned
and driven out of Irlonde —
though the cross was older there
than in the north's flat forest evergreens —
their impregnable hearts
were as brazen and as laced with fire
as any Pagan's near the midnight sun.

IN THESE ANCIENT WOODS

Patricia Livingston

AFTER breakfast, with its soft-boiled egg of nauseously liquid-white consistency, Catherine had her hair done into ringlets. For this she sat by the bathroom basin, forbidden to move.

Lizzie, the maid, took a comb and wound the hair around her forefinger, starting with a lock next to the left ear; then, fastening the ringlet with a bobbypin, went on to the next lock. Catherine's hair was a silky pale gold, each strand so fine it was almost invisible taken singly. Taken in locks it had a shimmering quality, changing color with the light. When Lizzie reached the right ear, she took the first bobbypin out on the left side and then the next and the next until she had removed them all.

Then Catherine was put out to play near the house on the rear lawn with her brother Jack. Jack was five and he was so old that when summer ended he would be starting to go to school. Catherine was not yet three and she was in his care. Looking after her

involved much patience since he was also responsible for looking after himself.

Jack was constructing a mountain of sand and Catherine squatted on the ground opposite him. They could just see one another over the mound. She was a silent child and she stared. Her mother continually tried to teach her that staring was bad manners but Catherine persisted. She endured the soft boiled egg torture every morning; she endured the ringlet torture directly after; and although she could not comprehend the strictures against staring, she had learned to endure the torture of the long long nights while she lay awake in terror without ever crying out for her mother to come to console her.

There was also the torture of not touching things when grownups were looking. That was the hardest of all to remember because there were so many enticing objects which made her forget. She would reach her hand toward some shining object and a grownup would suddenly swoop down on her from out of nowhere. Grownups were omnipotent and they were everywhere and knew everything, even her most secret thoughts and actions; which, when she considered it, frightened her almost as much as the long long nights.

The flood of August sunlight was warm and she

watched the shadow of her arm on the sand as she gently poked a finger into the side of the sand mound.

Jack said:

"That's the robbers' hideout. You'll make it cave in."

Catherine withdrew her finger. Jack noticed things almost like a grownup. Catherine knew that children grew up and she surmised that as they grew they became more and more like grownups, more and more alien and less and less real.

She was afraid of growing up because she dreaded the thought of ever becoming like a grownup. She dreaded it so that she tried desperately not to grow. Her small heart always reacted with a thump of fear when visiting grownups said to her mother *My dear! How she's grown!* She felt her heart constricting and her brain growing more mechanical and until her mother scolded her for it she stared at such grownups with a strange and poignant dismay.

But then Catherine's mother would tell the visitors that Catherine was a good girl, very quiet, played by herself for hours and rarely cried. She never never whined, she ate all of her soft-boiled egg, she sat still while her hair was being curled — she was, her mother boasted, no trouble at all.

Catherine knew she was very different from Jack,

who was dark-haired and sullen and broke things. He would not let their mother take his hand, even to cross the street. He would pull savagely free and hide his hand in his pocket, out of her grasp. Catherine was awed by Jack's courage against their mother. Many times he even refused to eat and sat in his chair in front of his cold egg for hours after breakfast was over.

Once he had frightened Catherine by picking up the egg and throwing it at Lizzie. Their mother then gave him a terrible thrashing which he fought and shouted through, calling her a mean monster and ugly bitch. Catherine cried with terror through it all, hiding under the desk in the living room and holding tight to the leg of her doll. She could hear the thrashing going on in the next room and she hardly dared breathe. She had a profound admiration for Jack and felt a special awe of him which she felt for nobody else.

Jack was parking his gangsters' car in a hollowed out place on the other side of the mountain and he looked across at Catherine.

"Do you want to see the train go by?" he asked.

Catherine, nodding, said:

"Yes."

After Jack finished parking the car he turned his

head and looked toward the house. He studied the rear windows, then got up and brushed the sand from his hands and knees. He gave another careful look at the house as he took Catherine's hand and pulled her to her feet.

She raced beside him as fast as she could as they ran across the lawn. When they got to the hedge he turned around and looked back toward the house once more. There was nobody in sight.

He turned quickly to the hedge, stooped down and ran through a small secret opening, pulling Catherine behind him. As she emerged through the hedge she fell onto the outer cement sidewalk and tiny sharp concrete projections lacerated the palms of her hands and her knees. She got up. Jack brushed off her knees.

"It's alright," he said.

"It's alright," said Catherine, grasping his hand again and looking up at him with her intense stare.

One of the adventures of the great world was to go for a walk on the concrete sidewalk. To Catherine the squares of cement joined end-to-end and leading past the hedges and flower gardens was endlessly alluring. The squares sometimes slanted uphill, sometimes down, and in cracks between them grass grew almost as high as her waist.

The first stretch of sidewalk was level. They crossed the freshly tarred and gravelled street which was empty and quiet; then the sidewalk began to incline down hill. Her heart beat like a bird's wings with the only kind of terror she found pleasurable — adventure.

They went down the length of the second block and the descent of the hill deepened. Maple trees on either side stretched over the street and met in the middle. All those dense leaves arched over them made the street shady and mysterious to Catherine.

Jack was very grown up, but not grown up enough to be frightening. She wished with all her might he would never grow up all the way and become unreal like her mother and Lizzie. If he grew up she would be alone in the world among strangers. She hoped he would never cross the gulf into adulthood.

As they approached the witch's house Catherine began trembling. Whenever they passed it she felt the same terror she felt in the long long nights. No grass grew in front of the witch's house under the hemlock trees there and the needles of the branches were dark, almost black. And although the great arms of those trees were lacy and open for the wind to murmur through, they would not let in the sun; the sun got lost in the blackness of the needles and even the shadowed light on the ground beneath them was

brooding and pale. The carpet of needles on the ground had a slippery sheen and little frightening crevices led into the roots and stones around the bases of their trunks. Pitch oozed out of the hearts of the trees and glistened on the bark like amber ringed with white. It was their blood, Jack said. They bled like people. The intense smell of the needles hung over the ground like pools of invisible mist.

She knew a witch lived in that house and she knew the witch ate little girls. From behind the closed green-black shutters dark window panes glittered at her. The witch was invisible but she was there in hiding, waiting until Catherine was alone to creep up and offer her poisoned candy and beckon her into her house.

Catherine had extensive forebodings of witches and their habits and yearnings. It was part of her intuitions of the wide world. As long as Jack held her hand the witch could not get her, but the long stretch in front of that house was an ordeal of sheer terror. Her little legs flew over the sidewalk. She knew if the witch came after her she would run and run and never feel tired. Fear made her legs swift and light. Jack's hand was cold and hot at the same time. Between their meshed fingers it was moist and slippery and she had to hold with all her strength

not to have his fingers slip away.

The railroad station was different from the witch's house. It was more formidable yet less evil, less threatening. These auras of places never ceased to alarm and impress Catherine. The feeling emanating from the station came from the brown stucco which fitted between the green painted beams and from the overhanging eaves with deep shadows under them. Her terror was commensurate with the depth of the eaves and the opaqueness of their shadows. There was a bird's nest visible behind a gutter pipe under the eaves. It looked like such a lonely place to make a nest and Catherine made a secret wish for the bird. She wasn't exactly sure what the wish was. She was afraid to know, other than obscurely, what it was because it frightened her, but she knew she wished it and it gave her a good feeling of having done something for the poor bird all alone in that place.

Jack led her along the station platform bordered by the shining steel tracks. At the far front end they halted and stood with their backs pressed against the cool stucco wall, with only the width of the cement platform between them and the tracks. The gleaming strips of steel rested on wooden ladders that were imbedded in small grey sharp-edged stones.

Beyond the tracks there was a bank going down

to the river flowing blue-grey and calm in the morning sunlight. Low green hills rose beyond the far bank. Oh, such enormous places! The immensity and loneliness of the outside world was almost too much to bear. And in all the wide world there was only one small secret place which seemed at all safe, and even that was not entirely safe. It was surrounded on every side by loneliness and terror. At night the terror crept into her room and invaded her bed. Only down under the covers was it safe at all.

The loneliness she now felt was so great that not even Jack could keep it away. She was appalled that he dared go out this far into the unknown world. She held tight to his hand. The steel tracks reached as far as she could see into the unknown. They came from it and they went out into it again. There was only this little space in front of them where they stood still. It awed her as they waited.

Jack took a step forward cautiously and looked down the tracks.

"The train's coming," he said.

He stepped back again and pressed against the wall beside her. They heard the whistle when the train was still far off. Jack's hand tightened around her fingers. She felt him give a little shiver. The whistle blew a second time, long and eerie. The steam locomotive

rushed toward them with an ever increasing roar and just as it reached them a powerful wind pushed against them so hard that if the wall had not been there for support they would have been blown over backwards. While the engine went roaring by Catherine's heart suddenly stopped and then gave a great thump. She forgot to breathe and her lungs got stuck full of air which she could not let out because her body was frozen with fear. The huge black wheels whirled by far above her head and she couldn't believe anything that big could go so fast. The roar was louder and worse and more terrible than the loudest noise she had ever heard. She was pressed back by thewind, motionless and staring at the enormous black wheels and the giant silver cars. *Tha-lump tha-lump tha-lump.*

She never said one word nor cried nor moved.

Then suddenly the train was gone, more swiftly than it had come, and the wind which had whirled them back against the station wall now pulled them toward the empty rails. She tightened her grip on Jack's hand and he held her safe from the sucking wind.

Jack's face was tense and pale. They stood there holding hands, neither saying a word, both staring at the end of the last car growing smaller and smaller in the distance.

Catherine glanced across the tracks at the calm river. Shadows of changing greys and greens and browns moved across the water. Everything seemed eerily quiet now that the train was gone.

Jack pulled at her hand and led her down the station platform and under the bird's nest again. Then they made their way up the hill towards the witch's house. It was just as scary going back but Catherine expected that. The world was full of terror. Again her legs grew fleet with fear and her heart pounded and she felt she could run forever without getting tired.

But after they had passed the witch's house her feet became heavy and seemed unable to run any more. Jack slowed down and was patient. He loved her and she was grateful. They ambled back slowly the rest of the way to the hole in the hedge. And while Jack looked through it to see whether they could slip back in unobserved, Catherine sat down on the curb.

Her legs ached. She poked a stalk of grass at the shiny black tar sprayed onto the street the day before. Tar had a wonderful smell and it shone like black glass. You could stare deep into its smooth round oozes, right into the heart of them, and never see through to the other side.

"Come on," said Jack, taking her hand.

She tried to stand up, but something was holding her down. She tried again. She struggled to lift her foot but it wouldn't move. Jack pulled at her hand.

"Come on," he said.

Aided by Jack's tug, she pushed upward with all her might and the tar unstuck from her dress. Arisen and clutching his hand, she pulled at her foot. It came slowly out of the shoe. Jack leaned down and tugged at it. It came up slowly and then broke loose all of a sudden as the tar let go. He pulled her and the other foot came up without its shoe. He bent down again and tugged it free, then sat her down on the clean sidewalk alongside the hedge and put her shoes back on.

"She won't find out," he said as he carefully tied the laces.

Catherine wished she could tie her shoe-laces like that. She touched one of the laces but Jack pushed her hand away. Then he grabbed her arm and pulled her up and they went through the opening in the hedge.

Catherine watched how the dried grass clippings on the lawn stuck to her shoes. As they approached the kitchen door their mother was suddenly standing before them. They jumped back. Their mother seemed

angry. Jack tightened his grip on Catherine's fingers and moved forward defiantly.

"Where have you been!" their mother demanded.

Jack stood sullenly before her with Catherine beside him.

"My God!" exclaimed their mother, looking at Catherine's dress and shoes. "You've dragged her through the tar!"

Catherine found herself almost as frightened as when the train went by, but she knew these terrifying things had to be endured. That was what life was all about, learning not to cry when terror swept you up like a giant wind, learning not to cry in the night, or when you ran by the witch's house, or when your mother shouted at you, or when she screamed and thrashed Jack as she now was doing.

Catherine was dealt with next. Placed onto brown paper, her shoes were removed and her clothes stripped off. Then her mother scrubbed her with alcohol and turpentine. The fumes were like fierce flames invading her nose and burning her lungs and the harsh rubbing burned her skin. Her mother was furious.

Tears rolled down Catherine's cheeks but she did not make a single cry. Her throat became a collar of pain choking back her paralyzed grief. *Big girls don't*

cry. She wasn't a big girl and besides it was just another one of the lies grownups told. She felt sure that big girls did cry. Grownups told so many lies. Catherine was not silent because she was a big girl. She was silent for some much deeper reason. To cry with a sound seemed impossible, and she could not remember when it had ever been different.

"It will never come off!" shrieked her mother as the tar came off.

Catherine watched. It was another lie.

"And don't you ever go there again! Don't you ever! Do you hear me! Oh, you bad girl!"

Her mother was a mystery to her and Catherine knew she could never be too careful. She was always watching her mother for signs, observing the real things behind her words. It was the only way to tell the difference between the real world and the lies.

"Oh, you bad girl! I'm going to give you away!"

Was her mother telling another lie? Her face was so full of anger. There was no trace of tenderness, no crumb of comfort. She ignored how grief-imprisoned Catherine was. She must have known it because she knew everything, but like all grownups she was cunning and deceitful. She pretended not to know how much Catherine wanted to let free her silent grief.

"Yes! I'm going to give you away!"

Catherine stared at her mother. She longed to be given away. She often sat silent in her corner dreaming about it. She longed with all her heart to be given away to a good mother who would love her. But now, as her secret wish appeared openly in words, she suddenly realized that being given away would mean being separated from Jack and she felt an immense panic that swirled around inside her like a scream which couldn't come out, with herself very small and remote in the center of it.

"Please don't give me away unless Jack can come with me."

Something happened to her voice in the midst of the last word of her supplication, her sense of space was changing, the room looked bigger and bigger and she herself seemed smaller and smaller. Her mother looked very far away as she replied:

"Jack is a very bad boy. Of course he can't go with you!"

She stared at her mother's face, searching for signs of a lie, but this time she thought her mother was telling the truth and as this conviction pierced her sobs grabbed Catherine just as though they were persons. They shook her and jerked her. They strangled her throat and pressed on her chest until they pushed the scream that was choked up inside of her out into

the room. She didn't mind going away from her mother. Her mother was the person who made her eat her egg and get her hair curled. She was the person who thrashed Jack and who made her lie awake and silent in the long long nights. Oh, how glad she would be to be given away to a mother who would love her — but without Jack she would be sent out alone into the terrible wide world and she felt she would die of terror. Even the train was not as frightening as the wide world without Jack.

As she was carried upstairs she shrank from the harsh jarring way her mother held her. It was the only way her mother ever touched her and touching was bad, she knew that. Touching and hugging were very bad. But her mother was like someone carrying a package or a bundle of clothes. The carrying was happening to her outsides while her insides were being shaken and convulsed by all the sobs and screams which she heard sounding loud and shrill in the stair well.

She wanted her doll but she couldn't use her voice for asking because it was being used by the screams. She wanted Jack to come upstairs with her. She wanted a hug and someone to comfort her so that she could stop the screams and make the world return to its right size again. She felt close to being swal-

lowed up and convulsed to death by the sobs and screams and she had no way to stop them.

Her mother pushed open the door of Catherine's bedroom with her elbow, put her into her crib and pulled down the window shade. The shadows from under the eaves and behind the drain pipe and bird's nest flowed up the hill from the station into the corners of her room as her mother left, closing the door behind her.

Catherine lay in the crib feeling that she lived inside her body and not in the room. She could feel the sheet and the blanket but they were outside her and between inside and outside there was an impossible division which she could not cross. What her eyes saw in the distant room were remote objects: the round colored beads on the wire rack along the top of the crib, the white headboard with its picture of Little Bo Peep in a pink dress holding her shepherdess crook and with her hand resting on the head of a fuzzy white lamb at her side and daisies all around her bare feet. Everything was far away and none of it was real.

There was a faint click from the door latch, then the door creaked slightly. She turned her face sideways to look through her tears. The door was barely open. It was not her mother and it was not Lizzie —

they never opened the door like that. As it opened a little more she saw an eye through the crack. Far off there was Jack's eye, disconnected from the world and peering through the slit. The door opened further and he poked his head cautiously into the room before he tiptoed in.

He stood far away beside the crib and put his arm through the bars and stroked her silken hair.

"She won't give you away," he said. "She just says that."

Catherine stared at him through the bars. He was the only real thing in the world.

"She can't give you away. They won't let her."

As Jack's real hand stroked her hair and cheek the enormous distance was suddenly gone. She could see him close by, his face pressed against the bars of the crib. The pain in her throat disappeared with the vanishing screams. The room returned to its recognizable size. All the distances closed up.

Still stroking her face and hair, Jack took his other hand from behind his back and gently shoved her doll through the bars of the crib. She lay staring at him, then slowly she opened her fingers and reached for the doll. She felt the cloth of the arm where it joined the smooth plaster of the lower arm and hand at the elbow and without taking her eyes from Jack's,

she closed her fingers around the arm of the doll.

They remained silent, hearing everything grow quiet. There was a lull and hush over the room. The house seemed drowsy. The shade luffed into the room with the movement of the air and bars of sunlight shifted on the walls. They could hear each other's breathings, Catherine lying motionless, Jack now seated on the floor with his hand on her arm. Catherine drifted into slumber clutching her doll; Jack then sank down beside the crib, following her into sleep.

LOVE AND TIME

Leo Archer

PART III

ALL through the week I looked for his note. On Friday morning I sat waiting, gazing bleakly at the despised soap sculpture. We were carving figures taken from the medieval tapestries. Some of them were delicate and charming, but we grudged the time the assignment was taking. There were surely more imperative problems for us to solve than transforming these bars of Ivory soap. Everyone grumbled.

Soon it would be time for the mail but I was no longer able to believe he would send that note. I was dispassionate, thinking forlornly about it, and I could find no reason for his continuing to ask me to his place. Men found virgins trying, I was dependent on my family, my visits were clandestine. He had many experienced women, free of all such impediments, to choose from. When I added to this my imposture, I was without hope. For I did seem to be both willful and acquiescent, and he learned that I was neither. He was disappointed, and now, indifferent.

Nevertheless after mail was delivered I did not wait for the elevator but ran upstairs to the office. I could see the envelope in my box before I reached the doorway. No one else would write me here.

I walked off with it slowly, reading the school address, his return address, the post mark, until, in a deserted part of the corridor, I tore it open. There were three lines —

Ruth, arune
Can you come again next Monday?
And will you be able to stay and
have supper with me?

Johnny

I folded it slowly, not thinking, bathed in a blessed relief.

I lingered on the stairway. It was an endearing building, warmly ugly, I realized with sudden loyalty. It had always seemed so hideous and so disparate to the pretensions of the school, but now I could perceive its qualities. Entering back into the classroom I found my classmates all were subtly transformed too. I felt a great sympathy for everyone.

Marjorie looked curiously at me.

"Where were you?"

I passed his note to her.

"What does arune mean?"

"I don't know."

I sat on the deep window sill and looked down at the people hurrying along Broadway. I knew Marjorie was saying: Don't leave me behind.

When I arrived home that afternoon Mother and Louise were deep in preparations for dinner. Mother looked up from the tray of hors d'oeuvres she was arranging.

"Will you set the table please, Ruth? Daddy is bringing guests; Lepke Buchalter, and that man — I can never remember his name — who is always with him."

"Jake Shapiro. Well, dinner had better be very special," I said.

Mother glanced warningly at Louise.

In spite of my flippancy I was disturbed by the thought of those underworld figures coming here.

"And Aunt Magda is staying. So that will be eight."

"All right, Mother."

I went into my room and on a sheet of notepaper scribbled *Yes. Yes.* in answer to both his questions. It sounded impatient. I tore it up, wrote *Yes.* on another, signed it, and slipped it into an envelope. I went out to the hallway and dropped it in the mail chute near the elevator, then turned back to the inescapable Sabbath dinner.

There was a law in our home against which there was no transgression. I think it was the only one. We had to be home on Friday night. On Friday nights our diversions were forsaken and we were devoted to each other.

My father never failed to appear. Every week he sacrificed an evening to this odd conception of family unity. The tension of those Sabbath evenings was always an anguish. My mother was under stress, beginning in the morning when she sought clues to his mood before he left the apartment, increasing through the day as she planned the dinner, reaching a pitch of apprehension in the evening when she heard his key in the door.

He might be in good humor, but we were never permitted to forget that it was a sacrifice he was making. My brother Raoul and I cast again and again into the sea of small talk and gossip to keep the table from falling silent, to cajole an indulgent smile from our father, to draw his baleful gaze away from Mother after one of her compulsively barbed remarks. Rhoda was quiet, praying only to escape his attention. He terrified her. I would try to devote myself to the elaborately prepared food, but it lost all savor and I would grow tense and desperate inside.

So we welcomed outsiders. My father was then

cordial to us, to Mother, and an affable and generous host to his friends. He enjoyed provoking a political argument for me and encouraged my challenges to his conventional friends. He held forth on business, the stock market, the relative merits of New York restaurants, night clubs, hotels, vacation resorts. And after dinner the overfed group would move to the large living room where the men lit Havana cigars and the women sipped liqueurs. A bridge game would begin and we, gratefully, would be excused.

As I was changing for dinner I thought with a rush of pleasure of his note. I took it out of my purse and opened it, first re-reading it, then just looking at it as I brushed my hair. I folded it again, small and flat, and slipped it into the pocket of my green woolen dress. It would be a charm, a talisman that would take me through the evening in dreaming indifference.

Aunt Magda sat in the big wing chair in the living room, smoking one of her fragrant Sobranie cigarettes. She sat erect and dignified. Magda the magnificent. She was my Mother's relative and the only one of her family for whom my father showed a genuine respect. She was unique, the matriarch incarnate.

Since her earlier days on the lower East Side she had declined in her influence as advisor and arbiter,

but she still commanded attention when she chose to offer an opinion. Her age was a matter of endless speculation, but for her it was a subject without importance or even interest. She was alive, that was everything. I could not remember a time when she did not give me her grave attention. My age never mattered, it was my response that was important.

She had many astonishing talents. One of the most impressive to me was her formidable tenacity as a story teller. Her victim, who offered himself out of interest, or politeness, would after the first hour be desperately watchful for the end of the tale; but he was lost, for Aunt Magda slipped so imperceptibly from one tale to the next, wove such a tangle of characters and wise observations and Biblical allusions that he sat on helplessly, his eyes glazing.

In her hotel apartment she had improvised a tiny laboratory. There she concocted, from unmentionable ingredients, some said, fabulous hair lotions, face creams, eye unguents and other balms to whose effective powers her own presence gave such eloquent testimony.

So there she was, as I crossed the room to greet her, a large woman with a titan's face and unbelievably golden hair.

"Hello Ruth darling,"

Her voice was rich and deep, with her eastern European accent. I kissed her cheek. I loved her.

"Aunt Magda." Around her hair there was a pleasing aromatic herbal scent. "How are you? I haven't seen you all week."

"Oh, I'm fine, fine. I've been here, two or three times. But your Mother was always alone."

Mother needed Aunt Magda. That wise, calm detachment provided the balance and sympathetic support she could find nowhere else. She acknowledged her powers and her authority and she was proud of their kinship. But she could not accept Aunt Magda's tolerance of my father's excesses, nor her stern criticism of Mother's failure to conceal her wretchedness. To save face and walk with pride were imperatives for Aunt Magda.

I heard the elevator stop at our floor.

"Here they are, Aunt Magda. And I'm supposed to be setting the table," I said as I left her.

My father and his two friends were in the foyer, taking off their overcoats as I passed. I kissed him and greeted his friends. Mother was there to welcome them, apparently poised and cheerful. My father kissed her and presented her with the weekly purple tin of Sherry's chocolates. They all walked into the living room and joined Aunt Magda.

As I spread the heavy linen cloth and arranged the silver and wine glasses I watched Aunt Magda and the men. She liked men. She liked my father. She regretted his crudeness, but she had a deep regard for his vitality and his shrewd forcefulness.

I knew Mother was grateful to Aunt Magda for taking over. It was a brief reprieve, an escape from my father's critical eye. She went to see if Louise was ready to serve dinner. She returned with her silver candlesticks and set them on either side of the bowl of fruit. I went to call Raoul and Rhoda.

In recent years Mother said her prayer over the Sabbath candles with only us children sitting silently by. So now, while Aunt Magda and the men were engaged with their talk and aperitifs, she bowed her head, covered her face with her hands, and with only our eyes upon her gave herself to her prayer.

This alone, of all the Judaic ritual she observed, did I find touching. The candles shedding their beneficent glow, the despair of her figure above them, the aching sadness of the moment when she took her hands from her face and raised her eyes, and the whispered: "Good Sabbath." We answered in subdued chorus: "Good Sabbath."

The guests were summoned and dinner began.

It was almost at the end of the meal that I saw

Aunt Magda looking at Lepke's receding hairline. She leaned forward, smiling sympathetically at him across the table.

"Mr. Buchalter, if you will excuse me, I think you are too young and too handsome a man to lose your hair."

Lepke demurred.

"You're very flattering," he said. "I won't see forty again. Something has to give."

Lepke's manner was mild and quiet. It was Jake Shapiro who had no social mask, Jake with his hard alert eyes.

Aunt Magda persisted. She was genuinely distressed by the sight of a balding man.

"I have a preparation I make, Mr. Buchalter, that will not only stop your hair from falling out, it will grow new hair."

Lepke glanced at my father.

"It's true, Louis." For this almost occult subject my father, a reluctant believer, earnestly used Lepke's given name. "We had a Polish maid, Helen. Not a hair on her head. Wore a wig."

I remembered that dreadful wig, dark red, stitched down the center, bun in back.

"She worked in a watch factory over in Jersey. Got some kind of radium poisoning and lost all her hair.

Her husband left her and she took a job with us. Then Magda gave her some of that hair lotion — " he rapped the table "and the damn stuff worked."

I knew it was impossible for my mother to resist this opening for her compulsive reproach.

"Yes, and her husband came back and begged her to forgive him. She told me he is as attentive now as when he first courted her."

She averted her eyes from my father's bored impatience as he sighed and asked me to pass the salad.

After dinner, on my way to Raoul's room for a game of chess, I saw Aunt Magda at the telephone and I was amused to hear her saying to the operator:

"Darling, if you're not too busy, would you mind ringing Trafalgar 4-2387? Thank you dear."

"Wait Johnny," said Celia, stopping at the open mail-rack in the vestibule on our way out of the Bedford Street tenement.

"Anything?"

"Yes, a letter from your mother. Thick one."

"Probably has a clean white shirt tucked in it," I said as she handed it to me.

"Or a clean Catholic barber," suggested Celia.

She paused over a square blue envelope, then passed it on.

"This is for you too."

I felt her eyes on me as I glanced at it.

"Is it from the same Ruth that Fanny met?" she inquired pleasantly as we went on out. "The uptown school girl who's been visiting you lately?"

"Yes, the same Ruth that Fanny met," I answered, nettled by her school-girl jibe and irked by Fanny's wagging tongue, but discomforted most of all by my own confusion.

"I didn't know she went to an art school."

I made no response as I joylessly glanced again at the blue envelope with the delicate grace of the handwriting, and her name and school address in the upper left hand corner. *Ruth, arune* . . . I ought to live in a place where I could at least have a private letter-box if I were going to revert to such adolescent romanticisms.

Jostled by the Saturday crowds, Celia and I made our way along Seventh Avenue. I knew she was waiting for me to open the blue envelope. Well let her wait. I opened the letter from my mother —

171-09 54th Avenue
Jamaica, Long Island
February 27th, 1935

My dear John,

How are you John? I was so disappointed when you didn't come last Sunday. I had such a nice dinner waiting for you and I made extra portions of everything because I thought you might bring along one of your friends. You look so thin these days John and the way you cough when you smoke troubles me. I wish you would take better care of yourself. Do you keep warm there in your place in the city during all this cold weather? I always worry about you. Daddy says all those old tenements are fire traps. He used to be stationed in that part of the city, you know. I

was looking through some old papers here in the desk this morning and I came across the special orders he received from the Fire Department in 1902. Just think, that was five years before we were married. How mournful the past is. But perhaps it's only because I'm feeling in low spirits. I am just getting over an attack of the grippe. I was in bed for several days with it. I'm worried about Daddy too. I am afraid he is having a return of his old trouble but he is hoping it is just a cold that has settled in his kidneys.

I wish, John, you would not challenge him so harshly. He was upset for days after your last visit by what you said about Father Coughlin and The Tablet. Please don't be cross with me John. I know that Daddy often antagonizes you but if only you could realize, as I pray constantly some day you shall , that he does it for what he considers to be only for your own good, for the sake of your soul. So please try not to quarrel with him. Won't you also, for my sake, get a hair-cut? I wish you would let Daddy take you out and buy you a warm overcoat and new shoes. He says you told him you bought the shoes you are wearing for a dollar in a second-hand shop on Third Avenue near the Morgue, and that they came from some unclaimed body that the city buried. Oh John, how can you bear to go around in an unknown dead man's shoes? I don't understand you at all any more. And that old black corduroy jacket you wear can't possibly keep you warm enough in

this cold weather. Besides it's so crumpled and shabby, and maybe it's my imagination, but I think it still smells of those fisheries you worked in at Provincetown. It isn't nice, John, especially when some of our relatives are here on Sunday visits too. It makes me so unhappy to see you so poorly dressed, like an ordinary workingman. I can't understand why you ever chose such a life, living in those dreadful tenements among such poor and queer friends.

But I didn't mean to write all this. I suppose it comes from having nothing to do, just lying in bed these past few days with my thoughts. I kept thinking of how you've changed ever since our poor Thomas was killed. But you must be tired of my rambling on. I'm all alone in the house and it's a way of talking to you even if you're not here. Daddy is out getting some groceries and Katherine and Luke haven't come home from school yet. Aiden is out too, trying to sell vacuum-cleaners. He sold one to Aunt Martha and two more to teachers in my school.

I am enclosing five dollars. It isn't much but I know you can use it. My fondest love to you and may God bless and ever guide you.

Mother

I detached the five-dollar bill clipped to the letter. Last Saturday it would have seemed a godsend. Now, enriched by my first forty-eight dollars of advance

royalties which were to extend into an infinity of three months, I felt guilty in pocketing it.

"Careful! — those damned cabs!" exclaimed Celia, grasping my arm at a curb. "What's your mother's news?"

"Nothing much. Just the usual mater dolorosa. Babies grow up."

I passed the letter on to Celia. She folded its pages back into the envelope and slipped it into her coat pocket.

"I'll wait until we get to my place," she said.

Sure, I reflected. You'd rather see the other one. Well I can wait too.

We arrived at the iron-railed entrance steps of her rooming house, an old brownstone building on Fourteenth Street just west of Seventh Avenue. Tall twin doors with frosted glass inserts guarded the privacy of a marble-paved vestibule. The locked inner door had bevelled plate glass in its upper half and opened into a high-vaulted Victorian hallway, dimly lit, but pleasantly warmed by steam-heated radiators. A small electric bulb with a scalloped edged white glass shade illuminated the dingy red carpeting of the hallway stairs and burnished the dark brown wood of the bannister.

Celia unlocked the door of her first-floor apart-

ment. Its single room was spacious and had a high ceiling and two tall wide windows facing Fourteenth Street. But there was a transient and lonely air about its drab brown narrow metal bedstead and flimsy furniture and faded yellow wallpaper. The walls were enlivened by some of her most recent oil paintings and water colors and several charcoal nude sketches, studies of herself made before the full-length mirror between the two windows. It was an endless preoccupation of hers. She had a curiously detached pride about her graceful lithe body.

I sat down in a creaky wicker armchair and lit a cigarette.

"Want one?" I asked.

She extracted a cigarette from the pack. I held a lit match for her and when she bent her head to it her eyes met mine in a brief enigmatic glance. She settled herself in the other wicker armchair and began reading my mother's letter.

I picked up a copy of *L'Illustration* and as I leafed idly through it I thought of my younger brother Aiden on his humiliating round to relatives and family friends and strangers, trying to sell vacuum-cleaners. What a career. How could he stomach it. When was it he had graduated from Fordham . . . '33? '34? He must be twenty-two now, or twenty-three. Tall, spare,

wanly handsome with his hard blue eyes, fair hair and northern Irish cast of face. Fastidious, dutiful, conventional, sedate. And faintly hostile, with the lingering old grudges of early childhood. Such headlong fits of rage he fell into whenever Thomas or I taunted him with that silly refrain: *Aiden, Aiden kissed a maiden.* We used to do it for the sheer delight of watching his berserk fury. No sign of passion in him now, though. But at least he had escaped the funereal robes of the priesthood. Must have been the supreme effort of his life to pull out that way, just a week before he was to have entered his novitiate. My father's mouth grew visibly more compressed and embittered after that. First me — no, Thomas first, vanishing into his grave. And now Aiden had eluded the Church. Only Luke left, last hope for the glory of a priest in the family.

"What was your father's old trouble, Johnny?" Celia asked.

"Cancer."

"Cancer?" she echoed, shocked.

"Yes, of the bladder."

"Was he treated for it?"

"Several times, a long while back, when I was still living at home."

She turned again to the letter and I tried to read

someone's reminiscences of Modigliani, but in the vast ear of memory I heard my father saying: *I'd rather die than go through that treatment again, John. I'd rather die.* Never before had he spoken of his physical sufferings. With quiet courage he had borne all his injuries in the service, even the most severe ones. He had been the hero of my childhood. The bravest man, I then was certain, in all the world. Risking his life again and again to save the lives of strangers. Never concerned whether those he saved were saintly or sinful. Never distinguishing between Catholics, Jews, or atheists. Why had he let the Church derange him so terribly? How could he worship that mythical monster Jehovah? Or believe in the malign phantasy of eternal damnation in the fires of Hell, for anyone? How could he? O those vile priests, prowling through his superstition haunted mind, and ruining his life.

I put aside the magazine and lit a fresh cigarette.

From somewhere over toward the Hudson River, briefly streaking high above the ceaseless deeper roar of city sounds, a fire-engine's siren wailed.

There never was much to look at in the Workers'

Bookshop, just a small selection of current proletarian novels, the standard works of revolutionary theory, and the stacks of periodicals I was thumbing through, all typographically stark. I took my copy of *International Literature.* It was printed badly on cheap paper, but it was printed in the Soviet Union and it had letters, blurred photographs, and stories from all over the world. I waited for Marjorie as she took leave of a friend who worked in the bookshop on Saturdays.

When we left, walking towards University Place, someone hailed me and I saw Rick Levin across the street. Though he waved enthusiastically he went on talking to the boy he was with in his intense way. Marjorie and I joined them and Rick clapped his arms around me in an impetuous hug that made me laugh. I introduced Marjorie, he presented his friend Walter Jackson, and everyone said at once that it was too cold to stand here, let's go somewhere and have coffee.

Walking swiftly down University Place I asked Rick about friends we knew whom I had not seen in weeks. Behind us, their words blurred by the noise of passing traffic, were the contrasting voices of Marjorie and Walter; her bright vivacity, his warm rich timbre.

Once inside the cafeteria our voices seemed loud, our good spirits out of place. It was early afternoon, the patrons were mostly men who sat alone, in silence. We found a table, sat down quietly and slipped out of our coats. When Rick took off his shabby mackinaw and revealed the sweater underneath, Marjorie fixed him with a look of mock severity and whispered fiercely:

"Comrade! No jacket? Just that counter-revolutionary brown thing. Where are your wits?"

Rick plucked at his sweater in dismay.

"My God. It's that Trotskyite valet I hired last week."

"Isn't it asinine? The new look of gentility. Off with the peasant blouses and sandals. Return of the tie, the business suit, permanent wave — " Marjorie trailed off with vexation.

"Well, Browder is a nice normal guy. He wouldn't scare anyone. I suppose they'd like the membership to match. Not too wild and a dash of American tradition," said Rick.

We permitted ourselves these friendly jeers at Party policy as one would remark the foibles and vagaries of a beloved teacher.

Rick jumped up.

"What am I sitting here for. Give me your checks

and tell me what you want. I'll bring a tray."

Walter grinned at Rick's vivid eager face.

"You'll need some help, my boy. I'm starved."

"Just coffee for us," I said, and they went off.

Marjorie lit a cigarette from mine and asked about Rick.

"We were in the same class in high school, and he was one of the radicals in the Social Problems club. He went to the Lewisohn Stadium concerts with us. A sweet person. He's at City College now."

"So exuberant! Is he always like this?"

"Yes. I don't know where he gets his vitality. He survives on stale buns and coffee — he and his mother. They live in a furnished room. Dismal."

I was there once. Rick was home from school, sick. I sat at the foot of his bed while his mother, ironing on a board set on their one table, turned to chirp her pleasure at this diversion for her son. Most of the occupants of that rooming house seemed to be the indigent aged; it was musty, and so quiet.

"I think she has arthritis, something crippling. She writes greeting card verse."

"Can she support them doing that?"

"Oh no. They never have enough to eat. Rick sells the *Daily Worker* on the streets. And he has a scholarship grant. A very small one."

"Is his father dead?"

"He deserted them."

"Oh — " she lowered her voice, "here they come."

I half-attended the talk at the table. The boys were praising the cafeteria cuisine in nonsense gourmet phrases. I glanced around.

He would not come here, it was too out of the way. I had thought of it before, of meeting him unexpectedly, and I always wanted to be alone when it happened.

We were being stared at. The man across the aisle had ceased reading his copy of the *Daily Mirror.* His stare was not that of an idle spectator, it was a look so hostile that I was at once uneasy. He wore ordinary decent clothes, he was in his late thirties and his undistinguished heavy-browed face would not have been noticeable. But his dark eyes were restless, darting coldly over our group, and his mouth was mean and constricted. I guessed then that it was not only our talk and affectionate freedom with each other that provoked his hostile attention, but that one of us was black.

"Walk us over to Fifth Avenue," I said, anxious to leave. "Marjorie and I are taking the bus uptown."

"That antediluvian snail? Only for plutocrats like you," said Rick.

Half a block from a bus-stop corner along Fifth Avenue we left Walter and Rick to run for the bus we saw coming. They sent absurd encouragements after us and we reached the rear platform laughing and breathless.

I went out of the liquor shop on Sixth Avenue with a bottle of imported Hungarian tokay wine. *Tokaji Szamorodni.* Even its name sounded gaily drunken.

How blue the March sky looked.

I glanced at the tower clock on the prison for women at the corner of West 8th Street. Quarter past three. Not much time left. She'd probably arrive around four. And I still had to shave. Damn it, why hadn't I shaved earlier. Just because Celia was still there, and not wanting to attract her attention by shaving on a Monday afternoon. Queer, the way she lingered on. She senses something is in the air.

"Hey Johnny!"

"Hi Barney," I answered with a wave, walking swiftly along, not wanting to be delayed.

Passing a florist shop, I stopped. Why not?

An elderly little man with a wizened Japanese face emerged from a rear room. I glanced around, undecided, in this sweet profusion of scent and colors. White roses would look incongruous in my flat. Daffodils were too conventional; lilies-of-the-valley too chaste . . . Why was it called deflowering?

"What are those over there, next to the jonquils?" I asked. "The tall stemmed ones with purple petals."

"Anemones."

She'd be one of those, if she were changed into a flower.

"How much are they?"

"Two dollars a dozen."

"Okay, wrap up a dozen, please."

As I neared my Bedford Street tenement I grew uneasy at the thought of meeting Fanny and having her prying eyes take notice of the tell-tale green tissue paper cone. But I got up the stairs to my top floor flat without encountering anyone.

I felt exposed, suddenly and irrationally, as I walked from the Sheridan Square subway exit to his place late that Monday afternoon. I thought it was entirely probable that a cab would pull up to the

curb alongside me, the door swing open and I would hear my father's voice, deadly and even: *Get in.*

I invented, in those last moments before I reached the hiding darkness of his hallway, a plausible sequence of circumstance that would make my father's appearance in this end of town, at this time of day, a normal occurrence. Going up the stairway I was able to ridicule my fears, remembering that he never went further downtown than the Hotel New Yorker.

Watching her sip the topaz wine I wondered why I couldn't be my usual self with her instead being so tense and sober. But I could not dispel the dread that if she knew me as I really was, she would never come back again. No one had ever accepted me as I actually was, except Celia. And whenever her glance strayed near the life-mask of Celia on the wall above the fireplace, my constraint deepened.

It was affecting her, too. I could see it shadowing her candle-lit face as she absently trailed the end of her cigarette through the ashes in the tray.

The sad twilight was darkening the windows; the

fire's glow, the candle's glow, the table with the flowers and the gleaming wine, these were the evening's confident beginning; they denied the slow blue ebb of day.

Dinner was vague to me, a salad, an omelette, and the pale golden wine. I was impressed by his ability to produce a meal so lightly. Our exchanges, on the contrary, were leaden with effort. His silences, and his persistently somber manner disheartened me. I would find myself stopping over an almost spoken thought to examine it again, then rejecting it as too trivial or too callow or too falsely sophisticate. My standards mounted absurdly and nothing presented itself that seemed important enough or true enough to speak. I wished this prelude were over. I wished for the time when words could be forgotten. Then I could know his strangeness without distress, then it would belong and have its place in the exciting silence, a leaven that dilated sensation.

"What is it about Sunday?" he asked. "Do you feel it too? So desolate."

"Oh yes. It always rains, or the sky is overcast." Like a sighing pause, I thought, between one week and the next. "Why do you think of it?"

"I visited my family yesterday."

It surprised me to hear that he had a family, that

they lived in so familiar and prosaic a place as Long Island. I had not imagined any life for him other than this one in Greenwich Village. He turned from the table, his legs extended before him, his hands clasped behind his head. He stared into the fire.

"Tell me about them," I said, curious.

"You'd find it dull, dull and dreary." He dragged deeply at his cigarette, released a sigh in a plume of smoke. "My mother—she's an amorphous maternal blur. More generic than individual. She's a school teacher. Gentle, patient, sentimental." He shifted forward in his chair. "And my father . . . well, I don't know. He's a cheerless man to talk about, or be with. Yesterday, when I said goodbye to him and told him I'd probably see him again next Sunday, he answered: 'Ye might be dead by then, John. Or so might I' . . . He seems to look forward to death."

"Why?" How could anyone.

"I don't know. Liberation from what he calls the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. Now that he's retired, he spends half his waking hours in church or prayers. And he has all the worst reactionary Catholic attitudes. Even anti-Semitism."

His voice was bitter, beyond indignation.

I found myself remembering the little Italian girl in our elementary school playground who screamed

at me: "You killed Christ!" I had backed away from her in uncomprehending horror. "You killed Christ!" she screamed again and again, following me in my retreat. "It was the Romans, darling, the Roman soldiers," my mother had comforted me. I hated being reduced to a symbol of all Jews since the Crucifixion . . . Was his father like that?

Detaching himself from the private visions the fire held, he turned to me.

"I've made you gloomy too, haven't I? Come, we'll listen to some music."

He took my hand and we moved to the couch.

Listening to Debussy's nocturnes I thought of my father, his face grown visibly drawn within the space of the past few weeks. My mother, weeping silently, told me the old pain was beginning to invade even the refuge of sleep.

The opening *Nuages* seemed melancholy, like those vast grey clouds in Dutch paintings that dwarf the human landscape. Why had I ever thought these nocturnes dreamily erotic? I should have chosen Beethoven's *Kreutzer* sonata, or one of Mozart's. I watched the wavering flame of the expiring candle on the table, its sword of light parrying the shadows

that lunged across the slanted ceiling. Everything seemed entangled in gloom, even my anticipation of what lay beyond the supper and the wine and this final ceremony of the music.

My earlier joy had become shadowed by anguish soon after her arrival as I recalled this was to be only a passing affair. The very thought of relinquishing my unslakable delight in her heart-bruising beauty was unendurable. But I could see no way of her vivid presence being anything other than transitory in my life. She was only seventeen, still under the authority of her parents. These secret visits would inevitably be discovered. Then they would end. And by the time she was free of parental restrictions she'd have forgotten me. The irrefutability of this plunged me into despair.

I wanted to be with her in spirit when I drew her to me after the Debussy nocturnes ended. Clinging together we sank onto the couch in a streaming-breathed tongue-meeting kiss. I wanted to join her in pure joy there in that transfigured darkness behind closed eyelids, but I couldn't find the way past my despair. She lay so very still as I unbuckled her belt and unbuttoned her grey woolen dress and slid the straps of her slip from her shoulders. I watched the firelight and shadows play on her breasts, then laid my head between them and heard her heart, so loud,

and with such a surging cadenced beat. Listening to it I slowly forgot everything and the light foot-steps rising on the hallway stairs were almost at the door before I became aware of them.

"Someone's coming," I whispered without moving. "I'm not going to answer."

"Johnny? . . . Johnny?"

Celia knocked and called once more, then retreated down the stairs. Why had she come? She never before had intruded on one of my free nights . . . Could she have seen, from the street below, the firelight flickering on the drawn curtains?

A flash of grief and guilt enveloped me, then a deepening sense of dread over this uncharted darkening course I was launched on. My submerged joy sank away more remotely than the faintest glimmer of a far-off star while the unsuspecting heart beneath my ear beat on in vivid cadence.

I promised to return again next week. I resolved I would no longer give quarter to the fears and shrinking apprehension that had still been in control. I knew he was becoming more than an avenue for the physical experience. Helplessly I acknowledged my growing involvement.

(To be continued)

EDITORIAL NOTE

In the second issue of our fugitively irregular Volume III series a prediction was made in these notes that what was then the approaching presidential election would never take place. And although one could scarcely call the massive psychological snow job of the 1972 presidential campaign an election, our prediction was wrong. Just as we have been wrong with similar predictions in the past. We have always hopefully underestimated the remaining time-span of these last death-throes of this dying Western civilization. When we were young we thought World War II would bring about its final demise. We forgot that a shark's heart, carved out of its body and lying on the deck of a fishing schooner, beats on incredibly for many hours. And that the saw-toothed jaw of its severed head can still convulsively snap through the heavy steel blade of a deck-knife. Malign monsters of the deeps and all reptilian forms of terrestial life are slow in dying. Look at Franco. Or Chiang Kai-Shek.

Anyway, we were wrong. Yet the underlying course of present history that led us into our premature prediction grows ever more imminently visible. The form and directions in the drama of history

are as perceptible to our intuitions as the unfolding form of a novel or a symphony. And when one views the swift course of the colonial American political drama which began with general Georgie, the long-haired slave-owning first president and has now arrived at the cul-de-sac of the short-haired & short-everything human, that creepiest of all reptilian creeps, self-proclaimed Quaker & Christian, Satanson himself with his slyly disguised name, Santa of the war corporations with fresh Christmas bombs in his Klaws, Serpent of Peace in our time with his cold-blooded snake-pit brethren in the Pentagon & Congress & the Supreme Court — and when one sees the American nation now enslaved along with former Spanish & French & Dutch & British slave colonies in Africa, South America & Asia by the Corporate-Pentagon takeover, it requires no gift of prophecy to know that anything *beyond* this point would be anti-climactic. Conceivably, as a final demonic jeer of derision at the slavish souls of men, we might have that coarse turd Agnew alliterating at us during the final hours of the American political debacle. But just as surely as the authoritarian government of Israel, along with other new militaristic African states, arrived tardily on the expiring scene of private profit, so too will it be with any further American presidential aspirants

hovering off-stage and awaiting *the never-to-be* 1976 presidential election. We have enough and plenty yet to suffer through, but at least we shall be spared the ignominy of that shoddy multi-millionaire folk-hero astride his family's blood-spattered white horse and dragging the ghost of his drowned secretary behind him; or that tenth-rate Hollywood ham actor who found his innate role in the cesspool of politics as governor of California; or the semi-literate ex-pugilist from Alabama who has told his idolatrous droves of followers that he would unhesitatingly drive his governor's limousine over the bodies of any war protestors trying to impede his rabble rousing super patriotic tours.

But we've wasted enough space on the deathly American political scene. Just as a note of encouragement, though, we can reflect a moment on one of the past dramas of history and remember that mankind survived the Ice Age and the tipping of the earth's poles. We'll find our way through the present spiritual ice age too. It's all part of our odyssey through time and evil.

Last month, in a news dispatch from Moscow dated Nov. 27, the *New York Times* carried a report of a poet, Yuri Galanskov, 33 years old, who died on November 4th in a Siberian prison slave-labor

camp, murdered by Soviet officials. Soviet authorities dispose of dissident scientists in secret trials by pronouncing them mentally ill and then sending them to mental hospitals where, through modern tortures and constant massive doses of brain-damaging drugs, the minds of such adversaries are permanently deranged and silenced.

Dissident poets and writers, regarded contemptuously as minor threats by the Soviet authorities, are exiled in the old Tsarist Siberian slave-labor camps. Yuri Galanskov, arrested five years ago when he was twenty-eight, was brought to trial, charged with anti-Soviet activity, convicted and sentenced to exile in Siberia. The charges against him were based on an underground dissident literary journal he published named *Phoenix*.

And so Yuri Galanskov, refusing to accept the role of passive complicity in the crimes of his government and refusing to obey Soviet censorship laws forbidding voices of dissent and protest, was sent into the old Tsarist cruelty of exile in Siberia where five years of his youth were immolated. His health declined and his anguished parents received word, not from him, that he was suffering severely from internally bleeding ulcers and they were advised to seek permission for temporary transfer to Leningrad

where a hospital with the necessary facilities for an operation and post-operative care would be available.

His parents petitioned the authorities. Their plea provoked a cruel response. An order was issued for the operation to be performed in the crude clinic of the Siberian prison camp. Yuri Galanskov died several weeks after the death-sentence operation. But before dying he managed to smuggle out a letter now circulating through the Russian underground. In it hewrote:

It is not actually just me suffering here and in pain — our entire nation is sick, I am but its momentary expression.

The officials of the anti-human Soviet government are of the same lowly mentality as the malign creeps of ours. Like ours, they think they can silence brave voices in prisons; and that they can extinguish truth by executions of those who spread its light.

Yuri Galanskov, brave poet, we honor
your faith in truth and we
mourn your death.

CORRESPONDENCE SECTION

I wasn't prepared for Paris. It was a quick decision, to come here and stay until we go on to Senegal, whenever that will be. Anyway, for long enough that I must make several "rooting" gestures. The first evening we were here we went to enroll at the Alliance Francaise. The next few days I almost fled — I couldn't stand the smog, the dirt, the noise, construction and, more than all that, I am intimidated by big cities. Paris is different. I remained long enough for it to touch me. And I am here, truly.

We are living in a quiet small hotel in the 6e arrondisement, off the corner of Blvd. Raspail, near Rue de Fleurus (wasn't that where Gertrude Stein lived?), Montparnasse, La Coupole where Sartre and de Beauvoir take their lunch, near the Luxembourg Gardens. Because we are a few steps away from the Alliance Francaise, we see people from all over the world, and meet them in our classes — there, and in the cafes, and in the streets one sees such a wealth

of strong faces, extraordinary faces, eyes of the spirit full awake — and these faces are in such a variety, from everywhere, reflecting so many possibilities.

I have to find an apartment, but I cannot move myself to look, because each day fills itself. And, for another reason, because my French is fine for talking philosophy and literature, but I have a terrible fear of asking a question about an apartment, *on the telephone*, and not being able to understand the response. So, I wait. Surely an apartment will find me.

The weather here is so volatile, from day to day and within each day — this afternoon there was some sunshine and blue sky — after days of smog and rain it is astonishing to see the city open out in perspective — and there are both pleasures: the long long stretches of buildings opening out to sky, and the short and continually curving warmth of small streets beginning, ending, changing name, changing course. And, from a height, the expanse of Paris. And, from below, looking up, at a corner, on a dark wet night, those roof lines and chimney pots, light from windows, and such angles of roofs and rooms in roofs that seem to have no dimension, like theater sets.

There is dog shit on the sidewalks — oh like everything in Paris, in plenitude. The dogs shit n'importe ou and each turd is soon pressed with its foot-

mark, like sealing wax on an envelope. Dennis says you have to play hopscotch going along the sidewalks trying to avoid the turds. If a real Parisian is accustomed, we will never be. I cannot tell, frankly, whether it is the indigenous or the foreign walker who steps so squarely. The dog shit, the cars, the smog and the Tour Montparnasse (a building that looks like a cheap movie monster menacing the city, one of those latest style glass skyscrapers that there is at least one of in every big city in the world — but here, surrounded by such an expanse of architecture and pleasures, it looks most absurd — and when I saw it with the Eiffel tower in the foreground, which itself is ridiculous enough, I had that image of a movie monster, as if a city of skyscrapers had uprooted itself and moved out to conquer the world. And it has that same cheap unreality, as the fake gorilla or blob superimposed against the miniaturized cityscape) as I was saying, those things are all that grates. And for the rest, life here is incredibly gracious and intelligent.

But I have tried to say too much, and it will sound foolish and foreign when I get my true eyes. In fact, at first, I can not tell where I am — except in the vaguest terms, except I can tell sharply and precisely what I have left behind!

There are bookstores and bookstores and bookstores. One, near us, on Blvd. Montparnasse has a complete selection of books in English by "recent" writers, and also sells the Village Voice. Well, I have no envie at the moment to read The Voice, but, I was thinking how it would be to see The Phoenix there. As soon as I am ready to feel out things like that, I could ask about their carrying it. By the way, the face of Henry Miller greets one at most bookstores, often at sale price — the book is called, I believe, Ma Vie. I must leaf through it next time.

The kids are in school. I had to start them in a private school because I have no documents to get them into a public one, and we wanted them to be in school with no further delay. They have enjoyed every phase of our exile, good spirits and very flexible, open to what is new and challenging in their lives and quite unafraid. Rama learned her French well from Giono and Ionesco, Aaron is picking it up fast, and Daniel is beginning. They were very warmly received by the young people at the school. Rama is happy to have escaped the overweening atmosphere of drugs, Aaron is responding with profound enthusiasm to the intellectual atmosphere, as if he had hungered for it. And Daniel takes the metro, changing trains, and walks along the quai, and plays

in the Champ de Mars, all comfortable and undismayed.

Now, I must make a try — I must call up one classified ad and see what happens.

Molti cari saluti,
Nidra

First of all, what a pleasure to pick up a magazine with good thick paper and clear print and plenty of space. The format is most agreeable, and I surmise it involves a lot of work.

I found the novel (why does Leo Archer doubly conceal his name?) splendid. The reader gets a bit confused as the masks shift in the beginning but once he picks up the pace, he is carried back into that wonderful, dense, exciting dusk of New York and the Village in the 30's, when one could still walk about in relative security and peer into so many briefly illuminated enclaves and feel the mysterious pulse that beat under the surface of so many apparently separated lives. New York was still a great city, and one was young and poor and hopeful. The poetry of all that is captured in Leo Archer's prose.

Hervey White's diary is very touching and evocative. I can find nothing on him here in the Belgian libraries. I enjoyed the poetry too, finding it far more

comprehensible and serious than the frantic and conventionally experimental poets published in many other small magazines.

But above all I come back to the solidity and high quality of the magazine as a whole. The moment one opens the magazine and starts reading, one has a sense of a certain excellence. You don't take refuge in obscurity to cover the second-rate, and this is already a great deal in the age of degraded taste in which we live.

All my good wishes.

John Bovey

Remove our school from your subscription list. We do not want to receive your publication.

B.P. Sackett Librarian
Arlington Baptist Schools
Arlington, Texas

Delighted to receive the new issue of the Phoenix. A good one — they all are good. I was moved by Elaine Burr's story. And by the poetry — and the others: Hervey White, Archer, Eastman, Chabrowe, and the further glimpse into Attica (dreadful). In

in fact there is little that isn't right, for me. And I want to congratulate you on the *format* — clear, big type, well arranged. It is a pleasure to read.

I met some very nice people at the Lawrence Festival named Cowan. He's editor of the D. H. Lawrence Review, published at the University of Arkansas. They wrote to me, told of seeing my letter in the Phoenix.

Have you read Delavenay's latest book on the young Lawrence — The Formative Years? It is $25 and I have not been able to buy it. It might be available as a special request through the local library, but they may not want to bother with a book by a remote Frenchman, even one on Lawrence. I hope he verified some of his "facts" in this book. There were glaring inaccuracies in his previous book — D. H. L. and Edward Carpenter. I found it quite interesting, though he often falls almost backward into the farfetched to prove his points. I feel that it is more likely the two men had a similiar *awareness* rather than a literary connection.

Would-be writers on the Lawrence scenes continue to contact me for information. A really interesting contact was from a Professor Pollack, of a Southern California college. She had written an article pointing out the close connection between my father and

D.H.L. and the undoubted influence of my father in Lawrence's early life. She sent a copy of the mss. for my criticism. It was well written and to the point—very much. It is, I suppose, good that almost 20 years after my father died he should come into his own, even through a back door. He was quite a person and a great influence not merely over Lawrence but on the whole area of the Eastwood locality. And now in England the scholars are exhuming my father's literary bones and making collections of his letters, poems, "journalistic" writings and other material, especially as connected with D.H.L. And I am asked to recollect as much as I can about his life and political involvements around the turn of the century and for the next 20 years. All this they now consider to be important historically since it was the time of the Great Change in England as was spearheaded by such men as my father in such small towns as Eastwood. Not only did Lawrence rise out of Eastwood, they think, but also "movements" destined to change the political direction of the whole country. There is some truth in that, but it is a pity "They" did not recognize the fact sooner. Now, so much of it is forgotten and I am almost the last hope for recall.

Unfortunately I was a very small child at the turn of the century, and for at least the next ten years bus-

ily engaged in establishing my own identity. After leaving England I was so busy in the mere act of living that the past was almost swamped out. Indeed, adjustment to an entirely different sort of life drains the past a little dry.

In spite of all these horrid truths I am busy digging into the recesses of memory. My stories, however, will be inexact background rather than reliable history. The memory picture of the years has striking high lights and these may be of interest. The whole mess is to be "taped" and sent to England for use in the Library and University collections.

Also asked for is an account of my early memories of D.H.L. "They" forget, apparently, how young I was and how unconcerned about the possible "fame" of my friends. He was just part of my life and my future.

Dorothy Brett wanted me back in Taos in October. She wants me there for a visit because, she said, "I have more fun with you than with anyone else." She is a strange and fascinating person, but it was not possible to leave then and now it is winter, very cold even here, much snow in New Mexico. Brett was disappointed and I hated not seeing her. She just had her 89th birthday. But at least she is not alone — a young English artist has moved into the studio

with her (there is a small extra room) so she has protection at night, when being alone, deaf and quite blind, was terrifying. That was such a strange quartet, Lawrence, Frieda, Mabel, Brett. Now Brett is famous in her own work. Her paintings sell for large sums and people make pilgrimage-type journeys to see her. She has her own gallery, managed by John Manchester who also takes care of her financial affairs and is writing her memoirs. She started them herself, in her own fascinating manner, but kept losing the thread and Manchester took over. Fortunately he has miles of "tapes" of her stories told a la Brett and I hope he uses them.

It would be good to hear from you and of how things are going. Phoenix seems to fill a gap and I hear of it from strange and distant places. I loan my copies to friends here and in San Francisco hoping to get new subscribers for you.

Very cold here and citrus crop losses for the farmers. 9 degrees in my garden, and snow. California houses are not built for such; it is difficult to keep them warm. The snow was beautiful, hiding the messy parts of the town and very unreal. It did not last long in its pale ethereal cover. Now it looks like dirty underwear. This is lovely country, away from town, and still a little wild in the surrounding moun-

tains. In my Indian job travels I would see many wild animals, mountain lions and even an occasional bear. But it is changing and dams are threatened on the rivers (some already in) and "recreation" areas for the ones who must be in groups. The wildness leaves and a vast noisy tameness takes over.

Love to all of you.

Enid

We saw your statement of hope and affirmation of life and faith in reconciliations in a recent issue of the *New York Review of Books* and our hearts and hands reach out to you in love and support, now, and in the future, I hope, substantially and cooperatively.

We are in the process of establishing an innovative learning and enrichment center in this rural community outside of Ithaca. Our approach to learning is to see it as a deepening and broadening of one as a whole person by an awareness of and a decision about how much diverse growth is possible to every person, and essential to our survival, intellectually, emotionally, culturally & spiritually as well as in crafts, art and skills previously thought of as out of reach, inappropriate or impossible.

Part of our effort will be to provide participants in our program with access to the best available contemporary literature. *The Phoenix* sounds like something so very much worth while and important that we would like to indicate our strong interest in it and request a copy of the pamphlet relating your past history.

Once we are a bit more sure of our own financial condition (which could be soon) we will definitely subscribe. Meanwhile may this be our first contact and another link in the spreading cooperative effort toward securing for people the good things for which this earth seems to have been made.

Courage and love! In peace,

John Gormley

Delete our college from your subscription list.

Mobile College Library
College Parkway
Mobile, Alabama

I trust you are all well. I suppose you heard of the hard luck that has fallen on Wang — a bad eye, awful thing for an artist. A poet would hardly miss

one eye — he keeps them closed half the time, any way!

Could you send me a copyright transfer for *Some November Privacy Poems* and *Thinking of the Autumn Fields*. Wang and I are finally getting the book printed that includes these two poems and 20 of Wang's wood cuts.

I'm having a fine fall & winter, staying home and reading nowhere!

I got your new issue, and have it by my bed. I like it — it's strange to see fiction taken seriously, but I do, and my wife is firm about its seriousness — everyone wants to be either Tom Wolfe or Mark Strand these days — some choice! — and I like the fiction you have.

Affectionately
Robert Bly

it's a wonderful scene here in L.A., something like living in a perpetual T.V. commercial (i mean that so much of life here is grotesque and aggressively advertises itself as so). i live in the miniscule Maid's Quarters of one of those white stucco mansions in Westwood with jungle foliage under perfect control, a driveway that winds uphill, and pink flamingos who come lay eggs in the chimney and leave drop-

pings in the swimming pool on their way to heaven. today the temperature was 102 degrees dry sauna heat with 'light to moderate eye irritation'. and since one always anticipates the psychic refreshment of seasonal change, i am looking forward to the L.A. winter which lasts from about Dec. 2 to Dec. 8 — i even already bought an umbrella (the unfortunate theory goes that in the persistence of room temperature weather, the individual tends to become either a fanatic or a monochromat. once again Southern California plays into the hands of the theorists!)

i went to a Sidewalk Art show in Westwood where the central attraction was a custom-built car in the color and shape of an erect penis. The driver, sitting in the left testicle, smiled proudly as young families took snapshots. it was a curious event.

Re: the university. An ironic fuck-up has occurred which i take to be a Divine Communication of some sort. that is: there is *no* Religion Department at UCLA! though i do not often think that God communicates with man through computerized software, the machine here insists that i am an Art Major and i'm not going to fight it since how useless it becomes these battles with unknown adversaries. already i have enrolled in a ridiculous Ceramics course. my classmates are all blond and beautiful eighteen-year-olds,

inarticulate tactile types who always chew gum and never wear shoes. i am tempted to equate these bored cuties with the New Adolescents. because sure they've put in the usual time surfing, fucking, smoking dope at the drive-in — but they've also been seeing *movies* at the drive-in, movies about themselves and their very own *Revolution* (the which, we must conclude, is surely over!) so here we have these hard-shelled innocents picking up their street-weariness at the flicks! a little political rape, spiritual despair, ecological alarm (in the back seat, heavy petting picks up poignance and momentum), and no wonder when it's over everyone's tired and drained and radicalized but most of all, hep to the jive and anxious for the return to the *real* stuff of living like being tan and barefoot, tye-dying all your underwear, becoming a cheerleader, eating Hostess Twinkies, joining the crew team, falling in love, buying a puppy and so on. it's the Younger Generation alright and they're here to stay — it'll be interesting to see whether their youth lasts longer than ours. (i think we can safely predict the next upheaval, following shortly upon revival of the film classics: Beach Blanket Bingo and Gidget Goes Wherever.)

dear friends, i'm afraid i'm sounding bitter, more bitter than usual but it's just the shake-up of living

in a new place and what a place, in fact i know i'm envious — it's true sometimes i wish i had long yellow hair and big tits swinging around under my Cycle T-shirt but — well the thing about L.A., it's enormous, 450 square miles of urban squash-out (with the spirit of a boutique!)

you know los angeles gets off on these perverted festivals, End of the World days . . . October 13 is this month's hypothetical date, the world is going to end on October 13 and i can't believe i won't be able to just get on a bus to the farm!

anyway. speaking of when i shall ever see you, i am quite uncertain. my summer plans remain vague, i may be in cambridge, or wash. d. c. of all places, or here or there in calif. malheureusement, a family of Campbell Soup heirs slipped in and bought the ranch my parents had their eyes on in montana. we are all very sad about this but figure that it's providential. we still have the whole lovely Big Fork scene, yes elizabeth there *is* a Big Fork and everybody's talking about it don't you dare ask *what* they're saying! jacques is still working as a janitor at the Whole Earth Truck Store in Menlo Park where the famous catalogue was born and is dying. he's living in a 1947 step-van which he bought for $700 (mother and daddy would have loaned him the money but decided it

would be a good experience for jacques to apply for a Bank Loan. *Scene:* Jacques at the Bank interviewing for loan.

interviewer: What was your last job?

Jacques: Picking up sticks in an apple orchard.

interviewer: Where did you last pay rent?

Jacques: I've never paid rent, I live in cars.

interviewer: Well, have you ever had an insurance policy?

Jacques: Jesus is my insurance.

the Bank gave a loan of $700 to . . . mother and daddy.) i drove with mother to the whole earth store a few weeks ago to visit jacques on the job. it was classic how mother maneuvered the Cadillac into the whole earth parking lot only to find, upon leaving, that the car was *trapped* within a jungle of 1947 step-vans and converted psychedelic school buses — in short, the whole tribal living scene of menlo park hippiedom! peter music is home from the cape, soon to embark for one of the hawaiian islands to find himself. around my birthday, he took me to a wedding in the mountains above stanford, land that used to belong to the harris-baez institute for the study of non-violence but has since been turned over, somewhat mysteriously, to roving bands of hippies living in tepees. it was a hippie wedding held in a beautiful

open clearing on the mountainside. the affair was catered by the New Age health food store, but general knowledge was soon abroad that the carrot juice was spiked with acid. all the things we now expect from the decaying hippie lifestyle were there to be seen in concentrated abundance, i. e. many naked hippie progeny running around with open sores on their faces and bottoms, many naked hippie adults sunning and funning with their private parts, stoned musicians playing bongo drums, triangles, blades of grass, hundreds of dogs tearing each other to pieces over what peter calls the 'territory thing', several eight-year-old Sufi mystics, a few pregnant women peeing around the campfire, and of course one or two token sociologists with their brownie flash cameras. the afternoon wore on with no sign of bride or groom, the wedding was to be completely 'spontaneous' so it was hard to tell if they would appear at all . . ! rumor had it that the bride might show up wearing army fatigues, but i later heard that she had found an antique wedding dress and had spent the afternoon running it through a laundro-mat in palo alto. finally, around five o'clock, the groom appeared leading his bride astride an enormous horse of sorts, anyway a huge animal covered with ribbons and flowers and astrological paraphernalia. actually, that part was kind of neat, but as the

wedding guests formed a large circle around the groom, the bride, and the horse . . . well spontaneity did not exactly come to the rescue, so it became a spontaneous nonverbal ceremony in which the bride and groom embraced each other for a full fifteen minutes while the horse pooped, the babies cried, the dogs fought, the Sufis chanted a low hummm from the base of their throats, and the rest of us looked on in some bewilderment. even peter music was spaced out by this spectacle as his great carrot-eyes widened and he kept repeating in his inimitable way: oh wow, oh wow, oh wow. i probably needn't mention that the 'reception' following the ceremony consisted of family and friends attaching themselves like bees to a blossom onto the original bride-groom embrace. this massive communal bear-hug went on for a half hour or so, and as night fell, hundreds of these 'marriages' had taken place, i mean the hippies were all beginning to dig the whole idea. peter and i finally got it together enough to leave and strike out for still heavier california twilight scenes; you know sometimes it's really confusing just watching what the world is up to?!

much love,
Roxy

Dear Friends:

We are two inmates imprisoned in the Ohio State Penitentiary. Neither of us receive any mail and time is a real drag. It sure would help hearing from people in the outside world. Any letter we receive will be appreciated and answered.

Johnny Reed No. 131-349
Christy Greene No. 133-570
Ohio State Penitentiary P.O. Box 511
Columbus, Ohio 43216

P.S. They have stopped censoring our mail — please feel free to discuss and rap on anything.

REFUSED *Return to sender*
Saint Matthew College Library
2739 Hazelwood Street
Detroit, Michigan

I've read most of the current issue now except the first story *Once in the Woods* which I will get to in a few days because I am a very slow reader. I'm really very moved by the whole thing and the balance I find within. I read *Love and Time* very carefully and I'm very touched by the basic honesty of the writing and the portrait it gives of the period. It seems to me that the essence of it corresponds with why *The Phoenix*

has been able to succeed the way it has and also to maintain its independence. I don't know if I am explaining myself clearly but I do hope *Love and Time* will be continued. The section from Leonard Chabrowe's novel told somewhat the same story but thirty years later and under vastly different conditions and, of course, with such a disastrous outcome. But I feel over the whole magazine there is an intangible mystery of deep faith which eludes analysis, and being included in it gives me a great joy beyond the personal satisfaction of being published for the first time.

I'm not in too bad shape these days but not the best. I took the murder next door to us and the outcome of the election — both of which might have been expected because they are not separated from each other — rather hard. I have started on my next piece too and this is always an occasion to be shaky until one has picked up the pace and gotten well into it . . .

Yet I can envisualize what serenity and the grace of a true peace of mind must mean. In many ways I have already walked away from that prizefighter's ring and the clamor that seems to fill my sleep. It's a vagrant vision at best and I hope in this new work to achieve something I have never achieved before, the pacification of an interior demon not through sup-

pression but through the experience of love. I think the subway prayer was a start in this direction. It left me with something I can't turn back from now. I can only keep in mind William Stafford's lines in the first reappearance issue of *Phoenix*

> *Anything we do can fail . . . I*
> *know that. In love, though,*
> *there are millions of ways to fail:*
> *all are sacred.*

This seems to me to be one of the most singularly beautiful things I have ever read.

I received an invitation in the mails yesterday to work with a group now negotiating with the Brooklyn Board of Education for a series of poetry reading in upper grade classrooms. I feel this invitation must have come from my appearance in *The Phoenix*. And I'd like very much to participate. I enjoy reading poetry to kids almost more than to anyone. (I'm enclosing a kid's poem I wrote for a young cousin about a horse. Actually it's written by the horse himself. Maybe you'll get a kick out of it.)

I fell over this morning for no reason at all. It kind of shocked me. I guess it's because I was uptown yesterday and walked too much and got too

much carbon monoxide. I think it's a good warning sign though and after I go to a ballet rehearsal at City Center today, which I very much want to see, I'm going to restrict myself.

Also, my brain is reeling from reading the first issue of *The American Poetry Review*, similar in format to the *New York Review of Books*, which I bought at Gotham Book Mart yesterday. I can't think of anything more macabre than to assemble all the present-day so-called important people in one issue of poetry. I'm content to stand on the sidelines and do my work. I think my inability to win recognition has been a great favor. I don't think they have any real idea of who the good poets are today.

Did I tell you I spoke to Frederick Pohl recently? He's one of the persons I induced to subscribe — an author of several books on the Vikings, among other things — and he told me he liked the story *Once in the Woods* better than anything else in the current issue. An interesting man, almost eighty. He now has a book coming out on Shakespeare. I really like him. He has such vigorous health and strength of mind. He's been travelling in Europe and all over this country for television and radio interviews.

Our love to all of you.

Thomas

One of the most innovative schools of education in the United States has issued, through the actions of its dean, a challenge, not to the *realization* of ideals of education, but to the very *ideals* themselves.

The challenge revolves around Paul Chandler, a Black senior enrolled in the University of Massachusetts School of Education at Amherst, and the efforts of the dean of the School of Education, Dwight Allen, to block Paul Chandler's admission to the graduate program.

This past fall, at a meeting of the School of Education faculty and members of the University community, Dwight Allen openly voiced his opposition to Paul Chandler's application for admission to the graduate program. Allen stated that he had "concern as to whether or not Paul Chandler supports some of the major social premises of the School." He described these premises as "radical reform within the system, nonviolence, due process, educational reform, combating racism, and using education to change society in a productive manner."

Supporters of Chandler's admission to the graduate program replied that Paul Chandler's service in the School of Education clearly demonstrates a commitment to the major premises of the School.

The broader community at the University was

further alerted by the dean's comments at a public meeting where he said: "I think it is important to recognize that when the School passed a commitment to diversity, this does not mean a commitment to all diversity. There are limits to the diversity we choose to function with. At this moment, it seems to me that Paul Chandler falls outside the limits of diversity the institution has chosen to exercise . . . The School has clearly identified the fact that admission decisions are made on much broader than simply academic terms."

Critics of Allen's position on Chandler's admission have condemned the dean for attempting to run the School as his "personal fiefdom" rather than in the manner a public educational facility should be administered. Members of the School of Education community have further accused Allen himself of not being supportive of the social premises of the School, particularly "due process." They point out Allen's arrogant decision to override the delegated authority of the body of the School of Education's faculty which had approved of Chandler's admission to the graduate program; his ignoring the favorable recommendations of fourteen of the School's faculty members who supported Chandler's graduate candidacy; and his deliberately withholding for almost eight

months a formal decision on Paul Chandler's application.

With the expressed intent of preventing a pocket-veto of Chandler's application during the Christmas recess and of putting public pressure on the dean to produce legitimate academic reasons why Paul Chandler should not be admitted to the graduate program, the *Third World Alliance* — a campus political and cultural organization comprised of Latin, African and Asian peoples — closed the School of Education building and peacefully occupied the premises for five days. Prior to this action the dean's comments had negated the possibility of any acceptable academic reasons explaining his disapproval of Chandler's admission to the graduate program.

Paul Chandler will graduate Magna Cum Laude in January, 1973. Presently employed as Coordinator of the graduate school program for the University's minority admissions program, he is also teaching in an alternative school for Third World children in Amherst, having co-founded the school, School for Truth. Chandler also travels to Brooklyn, New York once a week as an unpaid consultant to a neighborhood Tenants' Association with Father John Powers, a Catholic priest. He is a member of the Institute of Pan African Culture in which he works to bring

cultural and political awareness to the minority communities in Western Massachusetts. And on Sunday evenings he hosts a radio program, *Colors*, on WFCR FM radio station in Amherst.

Prior to coming to the University of Massachusetts Chandler was employed as a teacher in the Oceanhill-Brownsville Demonstration School District in Brooklyn. He worked as an Education consultant to organizations and institutions of higher learning including the National Conference of Christians and Jews, VISTA, New York University, Long Island University, Brooklyn College, etc. And he has traveled to England and Africa studying primary and inter-cultural schools.

Paul Chandler, 28, and his wife, Rochelle, are the parents of four boys and one girl. Rochelle Chandler is a doctoral candidate in the School of Education and is currently employed as a director of an undergraduate program for teacher certification in the School.

After pressure of the *Third World Alliance* occupation of the School of Education building compelled him to, Dwight Allen made a formal public announcement of his rejection of Chandler's application for admission to the graduate program. Paul Chandler says the dean's hostility to his admission was a pun-

itive action for openly questioning and challenging the dean's hollow rhetoric over the School of Education's commitment to combat racism and its actions toward minorities in the School.

The controversy surrounding the Chandler case has brought forth serious questions about administrative processes in public institutions of higher learning, along with significant questions about the dean, Dwight Allen. Many academicians and community citizens are now questioning processes that allow the decision of a single prejudiced individual to override a faculty recommendation of admission. Can a dean in a state institution, supported by the taxes of citizens, define the limits of diversity for citizens within a public institution? Is the consideration of ideological beliefs the jurisdiction of any admissions officer?

The credibility of Dwight Allen has been eroded in almost every sector of the academic community at the University. University officials have offered no defense for Allen's statements related to his rejection of Chandler's application. Allen's academic peers have openly condemned his references to "support of the major social premises of the School" as invalid.

It is also of grave concern to many that Dwight Allen, who questions another individual's support of

democratic social premises, has large vested business interests in the tax-free shelter of South Africa where a system of apartheid crushes out any semblance of social justice and democratic ideals. On a campus radio interview, following the formal statement of his rejection of Paul Chandler's application, Dwight Allen reluctantly admitted that he has a one-third interest in a new several-hundred-thousand-dollar hotel business his parents operate in South Africa. It casts a queer light on his posture of "combating racism". Another revealing aspect of Dwight Allen was confirmed in the same December campus radio interview when he acknowledged, while striving ineptly to dismiss it as of no importance, that he is having his son educated in a preparatory school in racist South Africa.

As a result of these disclosures lying in the background of Dwight Allen's opposition to Paul Chandler's admission, the unanswered question for many concerned persons now is: How and why did Dwight Allen become dean of the School of Education here in Amherst, at the University of Massachusetts?

Third World Alliance

Thanks for spreading word of my plea. I haven't received any word from W.B. of Fort Worth, Texas.

Nor have I received one letter from any of your readers. I know this can't be right. My plea appeared also in *Fortune News* of New York and there has been no mail from their readers either and they have a monthly circulation of over twenty thousand. My name was put on a list of prisoners to mail cards to this year. I haven't received any Christmas cards at all, except from my family & from friends I've known a long time.

I appreciate the help that you and other people have tried to give me. But there are too many problems for me to overcome. Don't get me wrong, I'm not giving up.

On November 7, 1972 there was an attempted jail break with a pistol. A guard was shot and along with twelve other people I have been charged with being involved in this. Any one of these new charges carry a life sentence and I'm sure that is what I'll get. Because here in Dallas there is no justice for the poor. If we weren't poor we wouldn't be here. I can look all around me in this prison and not see one rich man among my fellow inmates.

Well, "Merry Christmas."

tommy marshburn
Dallas County Jail
Dallas, Texas 75202

Phoenix arrived today. I just glanced at it, will read it tomorrow. A preliminary comment: the post office prohibitory order instigated by St. Mary's College is a mystery because Phoenix doesn't carry the raunchy off beat ads that so many "little" magazines and "underground" papers carry. The only thing I can think of is that St. Mary's really objected to the *content* of something in Phoenix and just used that post office prohibition to censor your publication and keep it from their students' eyes.

A few days ago while a bit drunk on forbidden booze I wrote down the following: "If America goes fascist I will have the last laugh even if I have it while dying in a camp. I want to see this hypocritical society go smash by virtue of its own evil."

I think that modern technology may well result in the demise of the American dream of democracy. Technology thrives best in an authoritarian society where the human being is compelled to become subservient to technology rather than technology serving the human being. We may well drift into a government run by the military industrial complex by default. We are *almost* there already. Russia is *already* there. I suspect the time will come when the surest way to tell the difference between Russia and America will be by the different languages they speak.

It wouldn't surprise me to see America, Russia and China get together and divide this world up like a pie or watermelon. There isn't really much difference between big capitalistic corporations and Communist state corporations. They are all self serving power structures.

Oh that night I was boozing I also wrote that "the human race deserves the Vomit Puddle of the Year Award." The simple fact is that I find it hard to love mankind because it seems to be so rotten so much of the time; I include my self in this feeling.

The other day I had a strange dream. I dreamt that I was in Central Park of New York City after World War Three. I was a well fed disembodied observer. All the city was in ruins, only the park survived in anything approaching its former appearance. One man was trying to sell a dead duck for $5,000, another was offering a pair of shoes for either $10,000 or a pack of cigarettes.

If I were god I would either redesign the human race or exterminate it and start it over again. I wouldn't tolerate the present world setup for fifteen minutes. However I am not God I am just another lousey human being, another inmate of "Concentration Camp Earth." Admittedly I am a privileged inmate by virtue of race, nationality and a bit of money.

Real concentration camps also had their privileged inmates. If only you dissidents could just leave the world alone and concentrate instead on finding out why man is so cruel, greedy and full of hate for his fellow men you would do far more for a better world than just protesting the present one.

I would like to see an all out program of research into human behavior. This way we could get at the root causes of the evil in mankind. The site of one of the Nazi extermination camps would make an ideal location for such an international world center and would be a far better memorial than some sculptured monstrosity.

I grow increasingly disillusioned about mankind. It is obvious we are a bunch of tribalists. And no amount of education, space ships, color TV and what have you will cure mankind of this tribalism.

Living here in Florida is physically pleasant but mentally it's a howling bore. I see how you people may get a Northeast storm according to tonight's weather forecast. How I envy you up there with interesting weather. Ours down here is so *damned dull.*

I've been writing this letter in stages and now that Nixon has been re-elected I am absolutely terrified by what our government is doing on the domestic front. Obviously it is dumping the blacks which

means that dumping democracy will be a part of the process since there can't be democracy for just one part of a nation.

I feel very guilty about staying on here in Florida doing nothing but I don't know what I could do anyhow in view of overwhelming public opinion North and South. I might consider Boston. I sort of plan a grand tour of New York and Northampton and Boston next spring after the schools close. In June most likely.

I've just been reading a recent issue of *The Unitarian Journal.* I don't belong to any church anymore but I get to see the Journal when Jeff C. sends it on to me. You may be interested in these transcripts:

"Today's problem is that despite continuing scientific and technological advances, the evidence around us points as much to the regress of mankind downward and backward into oblivion as it does to orderly and rational progress.

"Every unmanageable and unexplained suffering of human life seems a further testimony to the irrationality of being and the absurdity of existence. And every experience of the absurd is a test of faith. If the faith you live by rests on a rational and orderly view of the universe, you are in trouble.

"Faith based on evidence is easy. It is easy to believe that the Sun will rise tomorrow. And sometimes when life is most bleak, it is that simple faith that the Sun will rise which can pull us through. But if rationality is your only base, and available evidence your only source of faith, then when that evidence becomes irrational and absurd — you are in trouble.

"Rather than the empirical faith of the Old Humanism, I would suggest that insight of Saint Paul's when he said to us — *faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

"If your faith is based only on evidence of an orderly and predictable universe, and that evidence changes into the *absurd*, then you have nothing left.

"I am not a traditional Christian, because I do not believe in a God in Heaven. I think that that traditional answer is a cop-out. It looks at the absurdity of life, and then posits a God in Heaven somewhere, beyond this life, which will somehow straighten it all out and make it right at some Day of Final Judgement.

"It is putting a layer of rational orderliness to things at a supernatural level which tries to soften the reality of the absurd on the level of life as we know it. And I think it betrays the true humanity of the man Jesus who lived on this earth and suffered death for

what he believed."

I have always stayed close to the rational concept of life — now *I* have little left. My religion, if it could be called that, was the rational concept of the human race but I will have to change that concept if I am to survive.

I hope all is well with you. There isn't much to rejoice about this holiday season but I send my best to all of you for this sort of Christmas in limbo. Enclosed is a check for my subscription renewal along with a $25 contribution to help keep Phoenix going. "*life*" just folded up, maybe that will cut your competition a bit.

P.R.

p.s. The strange thing is I knew two black slaves when we were slaves together in Germany. It's all crazy — I mean this world.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Jean Giono, one of Europe's greatest novelists, has had scant recognition from Amercan publishers.

Hervey White (Vol. 3 Nos. 2&3 has detailed notes.)

John Mitzel lives in Dorchester, Massachusetts. His story in this issue is his first published fiction.

Leonard Chabrowe is a resident of Washington.

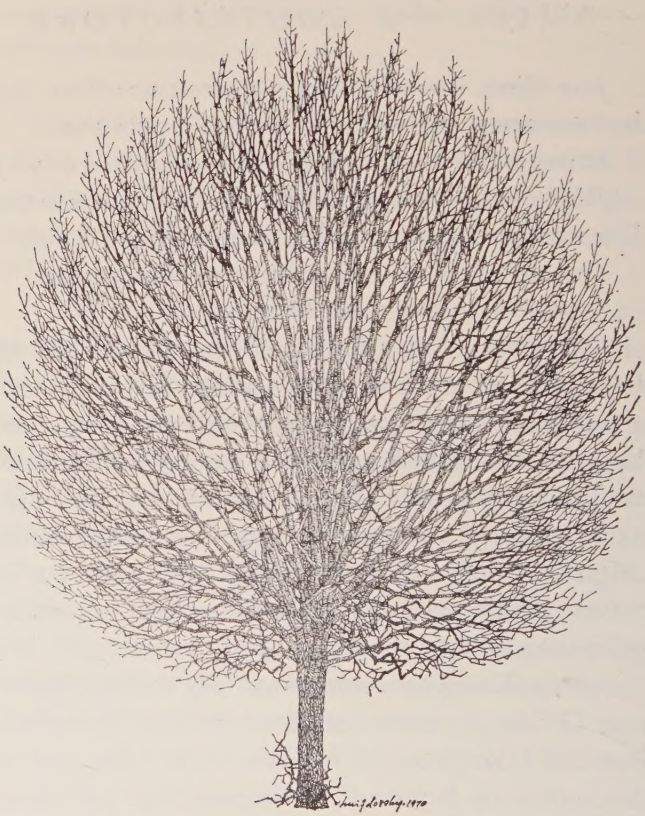
Thomas Krampf lives in Brooklyn.

Dilys Bennett Laing, born in North Wales, came to Canada when seven with her parents, married Alexander Laing in 1936 and then Vermont became her home. She vanished into death many years ago and we don't know why she appeared in our thoughts and prompted the reprinting of this poem which originally appeared in our Easter 1940 issue, but it was comforting to have her presence visit our cellar print-shop.

Patricia Livingston wrote to us: "My mother, Kathleen O'Connor, came here from Ireland. My father, Edmund Livingston, of Hudson, New York, was a descendant of Robert R. Livingston, the guy who helped draft the Declaration of Independence, and backed Robert Fulton. (He footed the bill for the first steam-boat.) . . . I wrote a play, *Five At The End*, in 1970 and it was produced off Broadway."

Leo Archer is a dual pseudonym.

Jacques Hnizdovsky is from the Russian Ukraine.



Numbed life on Earth, surviving all the winters of Time and suffering all the transient tragedies of Hell & Purgartory in this cosmic struggle of finding the way through the afflictions of mortality into the holiness of Eternity